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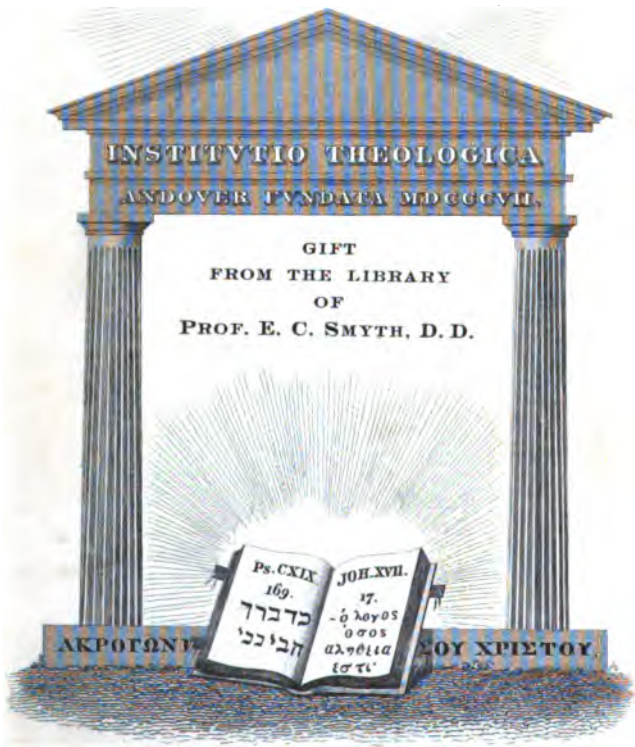

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Egbert C. Smyth -
with the affectionate regards
of
A. S. Packard
Bowd. College Jan. 1849.

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THE

WORKS

OF

REV. JESSE APPLETON, D. D.

LATE PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE,

EMBRACING HIS

COURSE OF THEOLOGICAL LECTURES,

HIS

ACADEMIC ADDRESSES,

AND A SELECTION FROM HIS

SERMONS:

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE AND CHARACTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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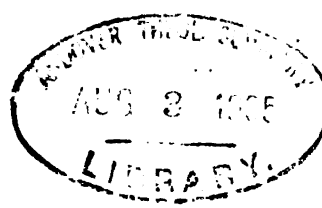

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THEOLOGICAL LECTURES.

LECTURE XLII.

FAITH.

WHOEVER reads the Scriptures attentively, must perceive that frequent use is made of the term FAITH, and that different degrees of importance are attached to it, as used on different occasions.

That believing, or the entertaining of faith, is, strictly speaking, an act solely of the understanding, can hardly be questioned; inasmuch as evidence is always thought necessary, either to produce or support it. Such consequences are, however, in many parts of Scripture, connected with faith, and such qualities ascribed to it, as will not suffer us to conclude that the sacred writers always confined themselves, in using the term, to its strict, common, and original import.

It is sometimes used to express simply an assent of the understanding, connected neither with moral goodness, nor with any uncommon powers. It expresses, at another time, some quality connected with the power of miracles; and often, in the New Testament, it denotes that which ensures salvation.

I. Faith is sometimes used in scripture to express simply the assent of the understanding to the truth of Christianity. Persons of bad character are, in several places, said to believe. While Philip wrought miracles at Samaria in the name of Jesus, Simon the sorcerer was convinced of the truth of Christianity; and is named among believers: Simon himself believed also. Yet it was soon made evident by a mercenary and impious proposal, that He was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. When our Saviour was on earth, some believed on him in whose piety he had no confidence: he would not commit

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himself to them. We read of others, who believed on him, but did not confess him openly, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Persons of such character, it is evident, were not sanctified. Agreeably to this, St. James speaks of a faith, by no means ensuring salvation to the possessor.

It will be said, perhaps, that the persons, here mentioned, did not in reality believe. I answer, that the contrary is asserted by an evangelist, by the author of the Acts, and by St. James. Nor is there any more reason to doubt, that many irreligious people at present believe the christian religion, than to doubt their belief of their own mortality.

But though unrenewed persons have some belief in the Scriptures, such belief, it may be said, must be very confined and imperfect. It cannot extend to all the doctrines, which are taught in Christianity. I answer, that all these doctrines are supported by evidence, and the evidence may be so examined by an unrenewed person, as to convince him of the truth. If he may believe some of these doctrines on evidence, he may believe the whole.

Besides, the Gospel is instrumental in converting sinners; but it could not be instrumental in producing the change, unless it were believed.

It is sometimes further said, that though wicked men may have a speculative conviction, they can have no realizing sense of the doctrines of religion. What is here asserted is true in general, but not universally. Some persons, under conviction of sin, or in the immediate view of death, evince not only belief of the Gospel, but a fearful, realizing sense of its truth. Why else are they so deeply distressed through the fear of the wrath which is to come? It is the terrors of scripture, and not the terrors of natural religion, which make them afraid. In addition to this, it should be considered that the devils themselves believe; nor is their faith wholly without effect. Their conviction of divine truth is so powerful, as to cause them to tremble.

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2. The term faith is, in several instances, used to express a quality, connected with the power of working miracles. Mark 11:22. Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart; but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Again, Matth. 17: 20, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, i. e. ever so little, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Agreeably to this, St. Paul, in 1 Cor. 13, speaks of a faith which can remove mountains: i. e. perform stupendous miracles. Concerning this faith, I observe 1. The person entertaining it, has a strong conviction that the miraculous effect will follow his word or effort. 2. This conviction must have something to support it.

That the person, possessing this faith, must have a strong conviction that the miraculous effect will follow his word or effort, is obvious from the first passage above quoted: he must believe the things which he saith shall come to pass. But, 2. We are by no means to imagine, that this conviction is a vagary of the imagination, for which no reason can be assigned. We cannot easily conceive that the Deity should excite a belief which there is nothing to support,—a belief which must be perfectly groundless. What, then, it may be asked, led the apostles to believe on certain occasions, that they should have whatever they asked; or that effects would take place, corresponding with their words? When Peter uttered these words to a cripple lying at the beautiful gate of the temple, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk," what supported his confidence, that the impotent man would be able to do as he directed? I answer, as the apostles had not, at all times, power to work miracles (otherwise Paul would not have left Trophimus at Miletus sick), Deity must have given some sign, on those occasions, when it was his purpose that a miracle should be wrought. What this sign was, we know not. It

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was probably some internal view, perception, or sensation; either of which God might render as distinguishable to the person, as any external mark. On supposition that St. Peter, when the lame man asked his charity, perceived that mark, whatever it was, which the divine Spirit had taught him to consider as the token of present miraculous power, he was justified in venturing his apostolic reputation on such evidence, and in doing this, he manifested confidence in the divine veracity.

3. We are now to enquire, what is meant by faith, when the term is used to express a quality, with which eternal life is connected. The meaning of the term, when thus used, I conceive to be, a firm belief in the truth of the Gospel, with correspondent feelings of heart.

Faith, strictly speaking, it has been observed, has its seat solely in the understanding, or intellectual powers. But the Holy Spirit has seen fit to use the term, when not only assent of the understanding is meant, but when a particular state of the heart is described.

Why a term, which, in common use and strict propriety of speech, relates exclusively to the intellectual powers, should so frequently be used to express moral qualities, it may not be easy to explain. But *faith* is not the only term, to which in Scripture, an uncommon meaning is attached. The word *knowledge* is usually made to signify a state of the intellect, and not of the heart. But, in Scripture, it is said to be eternal life, to *know* the only true God, and his Son Christ Jesus. Here, it is certain, that in the term, *knowledge* of God, moral qualities must be implied. Agreeably to this, Paul represents it as being his chief concern to *know* Christ, and the power of his resurrection.

Perhaps the reason why faith is so often used in Scripture to comprehend not only assent of the understanding, but a corresponding state of the heart, is, that the latter is seldom, or never produced, but through the instrumentality of the former. Adult persons in christian countries, it is believed, never become pious, except through the medium of a previous belief in Christianity.

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But, whatever be the reason, the fact is evident, as will further appear from the following remarks.

That repentance has its seat in the heart, there can be no question. But the terms repentance and faith evidently appear to be used in different parts of Scripture, to signify the same quality. When, by Peter's sermon, many were excited to enquire, Men and brethren, what shall we do? the answer was, Repent. When the jailer made a similar enquiry, Paul's answer was, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, we must suppose, that both these apostles taught the same doctrine, and presented the same conditions of salvation. If the repentance, of which Peter spoke, had reference to the heart, so had the faith, mentioned by Paul.

The Scriptures use various terms, when speaking of the moral condition, which gives to apostate man an interest in divine favor. Salvation is sometimes promised to faith; sometimes to love, hope, holiness, obedience, etc. In one place, it is said, Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but a new creature. In another, Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but faith which works by love. In a third, Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but to keep the commandments of God. Agreeably to this, our blessed Saviour, who said, He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and again, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, said on another occasion, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. This variety of language, must have been designed to convey the same idea.

I have here represented faith, as a firm persuasion of the truth of Christianity, accompanied with feelings, corresponding with such a persuasion. That the propriety of the definition may be more obvious, it is necessary to go into some particulars.

1. The Gospel portrays the character of God. It assures us that he always pursues the noblest ends by the noblest means. To him it attributes infinite benevolence. This benevolence is not a dormant principle, but perpetually in operation; and its op-

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erations are always directed by consummate wisdom, producing consistency and uniformity. While rendering present adversity or pain to individuals; while scourging communities or nations; and while assigning misery to the incorrigibly wicked, the Almighty never feels pleasure in the pains which his creatures suffer, but resorts to these measures for purposes, which, if made known, every wise and good being would be constrained to approve. Nor does he, for the accomplishment of these excellent purposes, resort to any means but such as are perfectly consistent with the highest moral purity, and with justice to each individual. His justice and benevolence are not less active in those parts of his government, which have most appearance of severity, than in those in which his mercy shines so clearly, as to be universally acknowledged.

Now he who has the faith which is connected with salvation, embraces and is delighted with such a character. He has confidence in God. He has no apprehension, that there can be any fault, error, or imperfection, in a government administered by such a being.

2. Christianity represents religion, as a reasonable service. It decribes the love of God as wise, rational, and perfect. Now, the pious believer assents to this, not with his understanding merely, but with his heart. He sincerely loves the law, by which his iniquities are condemned. He perceives that the allowance of any sin would be unbecoming the holy character of God, and of course, that his law would be defective, did it require less than perfect obedience. He does not desire that its demands should be thus reduced; but rejoices in the consideration of its immutability.

When it is said that the law requires perfect obedience, we do not mean that this is the lowest condition on which salvation may be obtained. This would be inconsistent with the most obvious declarations of the New Testament. But though unfailing compliance with the law is not the condition of being received to eternal life, God's claim to this is not relinquished. It is what man is under undeniable obligations to yield. No

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breach of the divine law ever has been or ever will be allowed. The pious believer is so far from desiring such allowance, that were it so granted, his confidence in Deity would be shaken, and his love diminished.

3. Christianity represents moral evil, as irrational and abominable in itself; and connected with eternal disgrace and ruin. In the view of God, it is an object of supreme detestation.

With these representations the feelings of the penitent believer are in agreement. His past sins are contemplated with unfeigned aversion. In his present imperfections, he finds a never failing source of humiliation and regret. The sense, which he has of personal demerit, is that which no language can express. He well understands the prophet's emphatical words: Know thou and see, that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.

That approbation of the divine law, and that conviction of personal guilt which is implied in piety, prevent those passages of Scripture which relate to human depravity, from appearing incredible. From the general aspect of the world the believer can scarcely doubt, that those inherent propensities to evil, which he laments in himself, are common to others. If so, he is by no means surprised at such declarations as these: The whole world lieth in wickedness: The imagination of man's heart is evil continually: You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: We were by nature children of wrath, even as others. The doctrines of scripture strikingly correspond with what he feels in himself, and observes in those around him.

4. There is a coincidence between the doctrines of Scripture and the feelings of him who possesses saving faith in regard to human dependence. The Christian religion ascribes all moral goodness in man to the operation of Deity on the heart. It teaches, that a life of true virtue is neither commenced, nor maintained, but by a divine power. Where there is an essential change of moral character, God is said to have given a new heart,—to have produced a new spirit; and the perseverance

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of the justified person is attributed to the indwelling of his spirit, Who raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

The believer feels his dependence to be such, as is here described. Whatever of moral worth he possesses, is not, he is convinced, the native growth of the human heart, but is a plant, which his heavenly Father has planted; and would wither and die, unless cultured and nourished by the same hand. He is conscious of propensities, which would lead to disobedience and ruin, were they not restrained and counteracted by influence from on high.

5. The christian religion represents salvation as gratuitous. By grace are ye saved, through faith. Being justified freely by his grace, we have peace with God.

No person can receive this religion to the salvation of his soul; no one can entertain the faith, which it demands, who views himself capable of standing on the ground of his good desert. If I am free from guilt; or if my good deeds compensate for my offences, I am indebted to no one. I cannot therefore be pleased with a religion, which represents me as condemned in the eye of justice, and utterly incapable of being saved, but through the compassion of God. That faith, by which the just shall live, not only assents intellectually to the doctrine of gratuitous justification; but rests upon it with the highest satisfaction and delight. The believer is willing to have it known on earth, in heaven, and through the whole universe, that his salvation is the result of divine mercy. His affections are in unison with theirs, who will, through ceaseless ages, ascribe glory and dominion to him, Who hath loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood. He rejoices in the religion of Christ, not merely because it affords to himself eternal security; but because this security is bestowed on him and innumerable millions, without endangering the order and happiness of God's kingdom.

The lecture will be concluded with a few remarks.

1. From the account of faith which has now been given, it is not difficult to perceive, why so much importance should be at-

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tached to it in the Christian system. Were it merely an act of the understanding,—an intellectual assent to certain propositions, it would, indeed, create surprise, that our Saviour should have said: He, that believeth on the Son, hath life: but he, that believeth not on the Son, hath not life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

But, if in the term faith we comprehend, not only that assent of the understanding, which evidence demands: but that state of the heart, those moral affections, which the relations of man require; there is an essential difference between the believer and the unbeliever; a difference, which enables us to perceive the propriety of their future separation. The one, yielding to moral obligation, is the friend of real virtue, and therefore the friend of God: the other is alike the enemy of both. The one has a moral principle, which qualifies him to enjoy the presence of God and the employments of the celestial world; the other would, in no place, nor in any society, be less happy, than in that presence, or in those employments.

2. If the sentiments, conveyed in this lecture are true, it is not correct, to speak of saving faith, as the foundation of holiness, or, as that by which we receive Christ. Faith is not the foundation of holiness, any more, than a thing can be the foundation of itself. Faith is holiness, or what is the same thing, true virtue. It is obedience; and will be expressed by external actions. When the Jews inquired of our Lord, What they should do, that they might work the works of God, his reply was: This is the work of God, that ye believe on him, whom he hath sent. For a similar reason, it is not that by which we receive Christ. Faith is the Christian temper existing in the heart; and therefore cannot be that by which we receive the Christian temper.

3. As, from the preceding remarks, it would seem, that the principal excellence of saving faith, consists in a moral resemblance of God, it is natural to inquire, whether the moral resemblance, if found in a pagan, will not ensure the salvation of its possessor? I answer in the affirmative. Wherever there

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is an obedient heart, a sincere love of holiness, there is a virtual agreement between moral feelings and the truths of the Christian religion: there is that which would secure those truths a welcome reception, were they made known. If there be truly virtuous heathen, they would embrace, with adoration and love, such a character, as that which the gospel attributes to the Almighty; and, of course, they must abhor the moral character of those deities, who are the common objects of pagan worship. If there be any virtuous heathen, they have that conviction of personal ill desert, which would render the Christian doctrine of salvation by Christ most welcome. If there are in pagan nations, individuals of such feelings and such characters, there can be no room to question, that they are the chosen of God, and, through the merits of Christ, heirs of the heavenly kingdom. For, in every nation, whosoever feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. God is no respecter of persons; and, therefore, will not receive one person of real holiness, and reject another. But these remarks do by no means express any opinion, as to the actual salvation of heathen. Such characters, wherever found, will inherit eternal life. But whether there be any among pagans, answering to this description, I am not authorized to determine, nor can it be certainly known till the day of retribution.

The subject leads us to notice an objection, frequently made; viz. that it ill comports with the justice of God, to condemn the heathen for not assenting to truths, which were never proposed to them. The heathen will not be condemned for not assenting to truths, which were never proposed to them; but for the want of true virtue;—genuine uprightness of heart; that quality, in short, by which the friends of God are distinguished from his enemies.

It is obvious to remark, that between the condition of unbelievers in heathen and Christian countries there is an important difference. The latter, by rejecting Christianity, clearly show that their feelings do not correspond with it. They have seen what Christianity is; what purity it ascribes to God; what

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perfection to his law: they know its declarations, as to the fall and recovery of man. If there be not a moral disagreement between themselves and such a religion, why is it not embraced? If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.

There is tremendous import in our Saviour's words, who said, that the inhabitants of Sodom, all covered as they were with more than brutal pollutions, should experience less severity at his tribunal, than those who rejected his ministry.

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LECTURE XLIII.

JUSTIFICATION.

In the state to which we are advancing, all will appear in the character either of those who are justified or of those who are not justified. It must, therefore, be highly important to ascertain both the meaning of the term, and the conditions, on which may be obtained those blessings which it implies.

The subject will be treated agreeably to the following arrangement.

I. We are to inquire, What is justification.

II. How the Jews expected to obtain this by their law.

III. On what conditions Justification is obtained; in connexion with which will be noticed the seeming discrepance between the doctrine of the Apostles Paul and James. As to the first; we inquire what is meant by justification. This term, it is conceived, is never used with propriety, but in relation to persons, against whom some crime is alleged. Whenever a person, who is accused, proves either that he did not perform the action, or that the action was no crime, he justifies himself; and this justification, the judge before whom he is tried, is bound to declare.

There is, therefore, as it respects human tribunals, an obvious difference between justification and pardon. When the judge justifies, or pronounces the justification of an accused person, he declares, we have said, either, that the latter never performed the action, of which he is accused; or if he did, that it was no crime. But, when a person is pardoned, it is implied, that he has committed a crime. In human judicatories, he who is justified, cannot be pardoned, because he is innocent; nor is it

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less obvious, that he, who is pardoned, cannot be pronounced innocent or be justified. But as it respects legal punishment, pardon and justification are even in civil society, precisely the same: he, who is justified, and he, who is pardoned, being equally secure against receiving any punishment from the law.

Were the term justification in a religious view, used to signify precisely the same thing, as when applied to civil transactions, it is obvious that no flesh living could be justified. No person on earth can prove, that he is not guilty: nor can God, the righteous judge, make such a declaration concerning any one. What then, you may ask, is Christian justification? And what is meant by St. Paul, when he said, It is God that justifieth! I answer, that Christian justification is the same as pardon,—a complete absolution from all punishment in the future world.

As it respects what is past, there is a difference between justification in common use, and justification, as the term is used in scripture; but as it respects the future the signification in both is precisely the same. As the person, who is justified before a human tribunal, can receive no punishment from law; so neither can he, who is justified in the Christian sense of the term. The apostle's words, It is God that justifieth, must therefore mean, It is God, who absolveth from obligation to future punishment. The same idea is conveyed in figurative language when the Almighty says, Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more forever. It is evident that sins, once committed, will never be erased from the mind of God. It will never appear to him uncertain, whether glorified saints were once transgressors. Literal oblivion in regard to Deity is therefore impossible. But the sins of those who are justified, will not, in the approaching world be brought against them, by way either of punishment or reproach. No one will in this sense lay any thing to the charge of God's elect. They who are justified, let them die when they may, shall receive no condemnation.

That pardon and justification are the same, appears from the language of scripture. Paul in the fourth chapter of the epistle

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to the Romans, treats particularly of justification; and he represents it, as being the same thing, as to have iniquities forgiven and sins covered. In using such language, David describes, saith the apostle, the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Justification and pardon are both procured in the same manner; we have redemption, even the remission of sins through the blood of Christ: we are likewise said to be justified through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus.

It is the opinion of some, that justification has a more extensive meaning, than pardon. Pardon, they rightly observe, does nothing more, than to secure the sinner from punishment: it implies no reward. Whereas reward as well as exoneration from punishment, they believe to be comprehended in justification.

But on what does this latter opinion rest? How does it appear, that justification implies a reward? In human affairs, it certainly does not. A man is accused, and tried; the accusation is not supported. This is made public; i. e. the judge publicly declares, that the charge is not supported. The accused is acquitted. He takes the same rank in society, which he held before: but he is not rewarded.

Persons who think highly of the distinction, which we are now considering, may perhaps allow that justification has, in civil society, no greater influence than to restore the accused to the standing, which he previously held. But, that this is not the extent of its meaning in scripture, when applied to the Christian, they would prove by this argument. In various passages of the Gospel, justification is connected with positive happiness and honour: Being justified freely by his grace, we have peace with God. Again: whom he justified, them he also glorified. In the former of these passages, present peace with God; in the latter, the permanent enjoyment of celestial glory is connected with justification.

I am very far from denying, that in the divine establishment, justification is conncted with eternal honor and eternal happiness. But to say, that two things are connected and always

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proceed together, is very different from saying, that the one is comprehended in the other. Besides, pardon is as certainly connected with eternal life, as justification: and therefore the argument is wholly insufficient to prove any distinction between them. It is true, both of justified and pardoned persons, that they will inherit eternal rewards; but this is not implied in the terms *justified* and *pardoned*. Pardon places a man where he was before he sinned; and justification does no more. If, when pardoned, or justified, he receives a reward, it results from that benevolent constitution, under which he is placed: a constitution, which makes all those heirs of eternal life, whose iniquities are forgiven; whose sins are covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not transgression.

All, which is essential to justification, is freedom from punishment; acquittance at the last day: with which acquittance, God has been pleased to connect the enjoyment of eternal life.

We are secondly to inquire, how the Jews, whose opinion on the subject, St. Paul takes much pains to confute, expected acquittance at the tribunal of God.

That they could believe themselves morally pure, such, as in strictness of speech, had no need of repentance, inveterate and numerous as their prejudices were, we can by no means believe. Their calculation must therefore have been either that their punctuality in discharging some moral obligations, would compensate for their neglect of others; or, what is still more probable, that their sacrifices and offerings and positive merit, were a credit, which counterbalanced, or exceeded the debt.

The impossibility, that compliance with moral law in certain instances, even if such compliance has its foundation in the heart, should exonerate the soul from the guilt of sin, has so often been shown on former occasions, as to render any present arguments unnecessary. To the other opinion, viz. that sacrifices and offerings had positive merit; and were a credit, which counterbalanced or exceeded the debt, some attention may be required.

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This opinion, however ill grounded, produced an effect, 1. in preventing the Jews from receiving Christianity: and 2. in corrupting the opinions of those who embraced it.

That the opinion is ill grounded, may easily be made to appear. That a partial compliance with the demands of God's moral law has nothing of merit, and makes no compensation for sin, has, we have just observed, been shown on other occasions. But if it be true of compliances with moral law, how much more obviously so of ceremonial observances. Can any person, who contemplates the nature of God, and the relation, existing between him and his intelligent offspring;—can any one, who contemplates the broad foundation of reason, which supports the law of the Almighty, imagine for a moment, that the violation of these is paid for, because a lamb is slaughtered, his blood sprinkled and poured out, part of his flesh eaten by the priests, and the rest consumed on the altar? How dishonourable such opinions are to Jehovah, may be learned from his own words: I will take no bullock out of thy house, or he goat out of thy fold. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?

Expiatory sacrifices were designed, as expressions of guilt, and appeals to mercy. The language of those, who had correct views on the subject, was this: For the violation of God's law I am now condemned; nor is it possible, that the guilt, thus contracted, should be annihilated. But God has appointed sacrifices, as expressions of mercy on his part; and to resort to them will be an acknowledgement of demerit on mine. Knowing myself condemned by justice, I will appeal to mercy in that manner, which has been divinely prescribed.

Widely different from these were the views of many, probably of most, in the Jewish nation. There is an essential, a radical distinction between the use of sacrifices, as an appeal to

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mercy; and that by which debts are cancelled, and mercy rendered unnecessary. The latter opinion tended strongly to prevent the Jews from receiving Christianity. For, if the sacrifices, which were offered under the Mosaic establishment, were an equivalent for sin;— if the good desert, attached to them, were equal to the demerit of the moral delinquencies of those concerned, what need could there be of the sacrifice of Messiah? Why should the Son of God be slain to take away the sins of the world, if this effect could be produced by the slaughter of a common victim? If the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, it would appear highly incredible, that Jesus Christ should have died for such a purpose. To all Jews, who embraced the opinion, which we have noticed, the doctrine of Christ, crucified for sin, must, according to the apostle's assertion, have appeared a stumbling block.

So likewise must have appeared the doctrine of gratuitous justification. If the Jew had been in the habit of supposing that he could, by prescribed sacrifices, balance accounts with his Maker, he would doubtless be disinclined to a religion, which declares in the plainest terms, "That by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified;" a religion, which represents the sinner's freedom from punishment, as the result of sovereign grace; to the prudent exercise of which grace, the sufferings of Messiah were requisite. This latter opinion would be highly offensive to that pride, to which the former would give disturbance. It will readily occur to you, that the same opinion, if retained even partially by those who embraced Christianity, would tend to produce inadequate and corrupt sentiments. It would prevent just ideas, as to the subserviency of Judaism to Christianity: attributing to the one that value, honour, and efficacy, which are exclusively claimed by the other. If the Mosaic Institution did not derive its value from its relation to Christ, and yet procured justification to the sinner, thus answering the highest purpose, which can be accomplished by any religion, it was extremely natural, and not irrational for the Jewish Christian to adhere pertinaciously to the rites and sacrifices of Moses. Nor

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could he, consistently with such sentiments, believe the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement.

III. We are now to consider on what condition justification is to be obtained.

On this subject, the epistles to the Romans and Galatians will permit us to entertain no doubts: Being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5: 1: To him that worketh not, but believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness, Rom. 4: 5: A man is not justified by the works of the law; but by the faith of Christ, Gal. 2: 16. Such, it is declared, have in all ages, been the terms of justification. The instances of Abraham and David are distinctly mentioned. But faith, you will recollect, when connected with justification, comprehends something more, than an exercise of the understanding. The character, that is, feelings of the heart, must correspond with those divine truths, to which the understanding gives assent.

We are by no means to consider faith, as the ground, or meritorious cause of justification. This would be just as absurd, as the opinion, that obedience in some particulars merits absolution for disobedience in others. The sufferings of Christ are the ground of the sinner's justification; and faith is the condition of our being interested in the blessings, which they procure. By him, that is, by Christ, they who believe, are justified from those things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

This state of heart, which is denominated faith, must have a beginning. At the first moment of its existence, the person possessing it, is justified.

In this faith is implied, as you will readily perceive, a disposition to the performance of good works. But a Christian's justification is not suspended until such manifestation of his faith is made. If, at the first moment of believing, he be in a desert, far from every object, to which his charity might be shown, and he should there die, he would still die in a justified state, and be treated accordingly. In this case, his faith is

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manifest to God; and would be so to men, were opportunities presented. The only difference between this Christian and another, whose works testify to his faith, consists not in moral qualities, but in external circumstances, which are beyond his control. Therefore, in view of Deity they are equally acceptable. To suppose a distinction, resting on such ground, is dishonorable to the divine impartiality.

It remains, that we notice a seeming discrepancy between the opinion of Paul and that of James, on the subject of justification. The former teaches, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, and that the faith of him, who worketh not, but believeth on him, that justifieth the ungodly, is counted to him for righteousness. The latter teaches that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. We know that truth is always consistent with itself: and, if the words, used by two inspired writers, disagree, these words cannot be used by both in the same sense.

The meaning of Paul is, that a man is justified agreeably to the Gospel system, without performing the works and ceremonies of the Mosaic law; and in this is implied, that men are justified by the exercise of evangelical faith, without that perfect obedience, which is the only ground of legal justification.

Now this doctrine is not impugned by James. He treats of a very different subject. He is writing of those, who thought themselves sure of justification, barely on account of the intellectual assent to the Gospel, without correspondent feelings of heart, or actions of life. He affirms, that the devils believe, and that therefore, simply a belief cannot be effectual. Surely St. Paul did not contradict this. St. James moreover shows, that they who, in former ages, were justified by faith, had works attending it: they had an operative, influential faith. Of this, Abraham was an example, whose faith produced correspondent actions.

James never taught that sinners could obtain legal justification; that they could be pronounced pure, or by any future obedience, make atonement for sins, already committed. Nor

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did St. Paul teach, that an intellectual assent to Christianity, without corresponding dispositions of heart, or a readiness to do good works, when opportunities occur, was the condition, on which any sinner could be justified. By faith, Paul means either the Christian religion, or the evangelical temper, which it demands. By faith, James means barely a belief that the Gospel is true. By works, Paul means works in fulfilment of law. By the same term, James means works in obedience to the Gospel.

Some divines are of the opinion, that James treats not of the conditions on which persons are justified; but of the manner in which their justification is made known, and that his arguing amounts to this. Faith cannot be exhibited, or proved to the world without works.

It is probable, that no person ever thought this the most obvious meaning of the passage. No one, it is presumed, would adopt the interpretation, were it not for the sake of avoiding supposed ill consequences. Now, if the preceding observations are true, no ill consequences are to be apprehended. The apostle James is perfectly consistent with himself; and equally so with St. Paul. But against the interpretation, of which we speak, strong objections may be urged.

1. The apostle is speaking of the justification of persons, and not of the justification or exhibition of faith. He does not say, that faith is not; but that a man is not justified without works.

2. The original word, which is translated *justify*, is no where in the New Testament used simply to signify *exhibit*, or *manifest*.

3. We can hardly conceive it possible, that it should ever have been made a question, whether faith is to be manifested, or exhibited, by the performance, or by the omission of good works.

But if a person is justified by faith, at the moment, when this faith, or holiness of heart, commences, though he be in solitude, as has been asserted in the present lecture, how, it may be asked, can this be reconciled with that declaration of James,

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above quoted, that we are justified by works, and not by faith only?

That this objection may be obviated, let it be recollected, that a disposition to comply with the commands of God, or to do good works, is comprehended in our definition of saving faith. It was never made a question by the apostles; nor, so far as we know, by any person in their day, whether men are justified by this holy disposition of heart, or by this holy disposition of heart when operating; therefore, it is never made a question, whether men are justified by faith, or by the works proceeding from faith. There are objects, it is conceived, which the Gospel never puts in contrast. If James did not, in the words, just mentioned, design to give any opinion on this subject, but to decide a question of much more importance, viz. whether men are justified by a bare assent of the understanding, or by a holy disposition of the heart, i. e. a disposition to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. I observe that the latter is a question of far more importance than the former. The former is indeed a question, which does not naturally present itself to the mind. For what is the difference between saving faith or holiness, and this faith or holiness exercised towards external objects? Can it be any thing, but what necessarily results from external circumstances? And is it natural to suppose that an opinion could ever have been entertained, that merely external circumstances could make an endless separation between persons of a holy temper?

I have now said what I proposed on the subject of justification: In conclusion I would observe to you, that the science of theology derives its importance from its relation to man, as an accountable being. The difference between the condition of a person justified, and a person not justified, is extremely great. The former is interested in the covenant of grace, which secures his acquittance and glorious reception at the day of judgment: The latter is not pardoned. For the whole amount of his sins, he is held to answer. He must appear before God, as a culprit, who has refused the most gracious amnesty. He dies under the curse of a righteous and immutable law. We are all in

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one of these conditions: and in one of these characters shall we be exhibited to the universe at the great day. This is not an affair of conjecture or speculation: it is the undeniable truth, as made known by the Son of God, and by his missionaries, who had received an unction from the Holy One. A justified state, you perceive, is not necessarily connected with the highest degree of theological knowledge, or with the greatest correctness of sentiment. The Almighty requires not merely intellectual assent: but a yielding heart. You must not only acknowledge what is the character of God and the Redeemer, and what your relations to both: but must possess those affections of heart, which these relations require. In brief; none are justified, but those who are sanctified, and none are sanctified but through the influence of heavenly mercy. May Jesus Christ be made of God unto you, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

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LECTURE XLIV.

ELECTION.

Among those many subjects, which have given rise to controversy in the Christian world, it is well known, that the doctrine of Election occupies a distinguished place. It was long a subject of litigation, while the whole catholic church attributed infallibility to the mortal, who presided over it. It was not to have been expected, that the free spirit of research, which gave rise to the reformation, and was cherished by it, would produce uniformity on a subject, in relation to which the most servile reverence for human decisions had not prevented diversity.

That the doctrine mentioned has been both attacked and defended by men of talents, integrity and real goodness, will hardly be denied by any candid and well informed Christian. A violent, overbearing, and dogmatical spirit is not the exclusive opprobrium either of its advocates or opponents. On one side, it has been represented as so clear, that no person of piety or honesty could doubt it: on the other hand, so absurd, that no person, in the use of common understanding, could believe it.

It is my present object to set before you some considerations suggested by reason and revelation, which may be of use in forming a decision on a subject, which, by concession of both the conflicting parties, is in no inconsiderable degree important.

As the doctrine of a Divine Providence comes into all our inquiries concerning that of election, it may not be useless to spend a few moments in considering what is implied in the former. I know not, that any, since the sect of Epicurus became extinct, have denied, that he who created the world, maintains some kind of government over it. But, as to the extent of

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that government, all theists are by no means agreed. Many believe a general, who deny a particular providence. They suppose the universe to be an object of God's attention. They suppose that our system, and even our earth, is not unworthy of his care. Perhaps it is not absurd in their estimation, to suppose his providence to embrace wars and revolutions, by which the character, condition, and happiness of men are so materially affected. But that ordinary occurrences, and the circumstances of obscure individuals should receive the notice of God, cannot, they apprehend, be reconciled with his infinite majesty.

To these we shall answer with conciseness, having on a former occasion attended to the subject distinctly.

1. If there is any object of so little importance, as not to have been created by the divine hand, it is to be presumed, that such objects will not be comprehended in his providence. But that which it was not unsuitable for God to create, it cannot be unsuitable for him to preserve and superintend. If there were reasons for giving existence to the meanest of men, to the birds, and the reptiles, there may be as good reasons for continuing and providing for their existence.

2. As creation is exclusively the work of God; as his wisdom and his power is concerned in the structure of every animal and vegetable body, the existence of such bodies being necessary to complete the system, which he designed; there was some purpose, which they were to answer. He therefore considers it important that this purpose should be answered. He will not then resign them to chance, nor withhold from them that attention, which was exerted in their creation. He will not suffer them to perish so soon, nor to be in such circumstances, as that the object, for which they were made, shall not be accomplished.

Those reasons, which render great events important, prove that small ones may be so. National wars and revolutions are sometimes the effect of occurrences, which would otherwise pass without human observation. The preservation of the Jewish people, during their residence under the Persian government,

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was an event of undeniable magnitude. But this event, as appears by the book of Esther, was connected with the king's vigilancy on a certain night, his seemingly odd fancy in choosing to be amused by recurring to the public chronicles, and the particular volume and section, opened by the person in waiting. The Roman tower, it is well known, was saved by the cries of a stupid bird, when the Gauls, under cover of the night, were ascending the rock on which it stood.

4. The opinion that the providence and agency of God do not extend to all his works, is as little consistent with sound philosophy, as it is with the Christian religion; the author of which has declared to us, that the lilies of the field are arrayed and adorned by the divine hand, and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father.

The foreknowledge of God will hardly be denied by any, who believe his universal providence. If he could not with certainty foresee future events, he could but imperfectly provide for them. Not knowing what exigencies might arise, he could have no settled plan of operation. Measures which were conjectured to be salutary, would, by unexpected events be proved otherwise. Plans which Deity had once adopted, he would frequently be under the necessity of abandoning. In divine providence there would be the same vacillancy which appears in human proceedings. In opposition to this the Scriptures declare, that the foreknowledge of God is perfect, and that his purposes are immutable. God is said to be perfect in knowledge. All the prophecies which have been accomplished, evince his knowledge of future events. Among the things predicted, many depend on human volition. The treachery of Judas was foretold by the Psalmist. Isaiah, at the distance of more than seven centuries, predicted the manner in which the Jews should treat Messiah. The writer of the apostolic acts, treating of the crucifixion of Christ, uses the following language: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. And again in the 4th chapter: For

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of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to have done. That the divine foreknowledge of that criminal disposition, which led the murderers of our Saviour to the perpetration of the deed, is here asserted, admits no doubt.

Nor is the immutability of God taught with less perspicuity: The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart from generation to generation. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. God is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? The apostle speaks of the immutability of God's counsel; and asserts, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. For reasons already assigned, this immutability of his counsel, proves that there can be no defect in his foreknowledge.

If the foreknowledge of God is perfect, the present characters, and future destinies of all men, are comprehended in it. Whether the doctrine of election is true or false, it will hardly be called in question, that the sentence which each member of the human family will receive at the last day, is now as distinctly known to God, as it will be at that most awful period.

I am by no means prepared to assert that the foreknowledge of God necessarily implies predetermination. But there is, I think, in the doctrine of divine prescience, something of more interesting sublimity than is usually thought; and something calculated to prepare the mind for a candid examination of the arguments relating to the choice, or election of God.

There is mentioned in Scripture a twofold election: one to the enjoyment of temporal favours and external advantages; the other to spiritual and endless felicity.

1. There is an election to the enjoyment of temporal favours and external advantages. In this sense the Jews were the elect people of God. They were called the people whom he had

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chosen for himself. Speaking of Cyrus he saith: For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel, mine elect, I have called thee by thy name, &c. He brought up his people with joy, and his chosen, (or elect,) with gladness. The children of Jacob are called his chosen ones. Agreeably to this Moses says to the Israelites: Thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth. Yet we know that the nation of Israel, as a community, were ungrateful, refractory, and idolatrous, and by consequence, the objects of divine displeasure. Their election must, therefore, have had respect exclusively to their visible relation to God,—their privileges—their covenant, and means of grace.

Should you inquire whether God universally bestows temporal and external advantages, according to the previous character of the recipients, it must doubtless be answered in the negative. If the conduct of Israel left any reason to doubt, whether their election were the reward either of absolute, or comparative goodness, we might settle the question at once by recurring to the divine declaration: Not for thy righteousness, nor for th euprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess the land. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not the good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people.

This people eventually became reprobate in the same sense, in which they had been elected. And though their election had not been founded on any good deserving; their reprobation was unquestionably the result of their disobedience. Moses had threatened them, that if disobedient, they should be consumed. Christ declared to them that the kingdom of God should be taken from them and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. Accordingly the apostle has informed us, that the Jews were cut off because of unbelief, and because they had killed the Prince of life.

In a sense, similar to the above, was Judas a chosen disciple. Have I not, saith Christ, chosen you twelve; and one of you

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is a devil. He was elected into Christ's family, to the enjoyment of privileges, which if rightly improved, would have secured salvation. Yet this same Judas was unquestionably lost. Concerning him it is expressly said: It had been good for that man, if he had not been born.

Should it occur to you, as an objection to Christianity, that even such an election, as that now mentioned, should be taught in it, it must be answered, that if it be an objection of any weight, its influence is not confined to Christianity, but extends to natural religion. For, if we examine the whole of the divine government, which is exposed to human observation, it will be found, that God dispenses favours in such a manner, as human reason would by no means, *a prori* have conjectured; and that unlimited diversity is obvious in this distribution. Of all the creatures which God has brought into existence, some are known to occupy a rank vastly more elevated and desirable than that of others. Man stands much higher in the general scale, than other animals. The difference is scarcely less between the native powers of some men and those of others. Extremely various is the human condition, as to the means of present happiness, as to intellectual, and moral improvement. There are not a few, who are chilled by cold, and pining with hunger. There are not a few, who, by a severer destiny, are exposed to the contumely, the chains, and scourges of despotism. Contrast this with the security and affluence, to which others are born, and in which they continue during the whole of life.

As to advantages for intellectual cultivation, what can be more different than the condition of the Hottentot, or the native of New Holland, and the favoured European, who draws his first breath in the atmosphere of letters? As to moral improvement, what can be more different, than the condition of a child, educated by enlightened and exemplary Christian parents, and that of those who are acquainted with no worship, but the orgies of Juggernaut.

If the comparison be between our own species and celestial

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beings, the same idea of diversity will still be presented. The angels are raised to a high degree of superiority above men.

Now in the establishment of all these differences, a regard to previous character, is by the nature of the case precluded. We have been speaking, you perceive, of the various circumstances in which different orders of beings, and different individuals of the same order, begin their existence. That one being is made an angel, is not a reward for services rendered before he was made. That one man is born a Hottentot, or Hindoo, is not in punishment for crimes previously perpetrated. This idea is very clearly conveyed by St. Paul, when discoursing of the different fortunes of Israel and Edom: The children not being yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said, the elder shall serve the younger. (Rom. 9: 11.)

It appears, then, to be an undeniable fact, whatever may become of the doctrine in question, that God has distributed his favours variously, and has placed some men independently of any thing preceding, in a condition vastly more favorable than others for knowledge, virtue and piety. As this is a thing open to universal observation, it will probably be neither denied, nor thought to impugn the doctrine of divine justice.

Whatever it is just in God actually to perform, it could not be unjust for him to predetermine. If, therefore, without any violation of justice, he actually distributes to some, very great advantages of a religious kind, and to others, those which are inconsiderable, he might, without any violation of justice, have determined this from eternity.

2. From various passages of Scripture, there appears to be an election to spiritual and eternal enjoyments. Our Saviour, speaking to the Jews, uses the following remarkable language: All that the Father hath given me, come unto me; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, (John vi. 37.) The same divine teacher has informed us that in the day of judgment, it will be said to the righteous: Come, ye blessed of

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my Father; inherit the kingdom, prepared for you before the foundation of the world. Then it is asserted, you observe, first, that a kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world; and secondly, that it was prepared for those who shall actually inherit it.

In the VIIIth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, we have the following passages in connexion: We know that all things shall work together for good to them that love God; to them that are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. The following question is subjoined: Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?

The sacred writers, in obvious agreement with reason, represent the heavenly state, as that for which all men are not prepared. If the enjoyment of this state result from virtuous society, devout exercises, and from contemplation on the measures and attributes of God, it is extremely obvious that nothing is less calculated to make most men happy. Accordingly St. Paul in the name of himself and fellow Christians gave thanks to God, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and our Saviour speaks of those who are not fit for the kingdom of heaven; and speaks of sinners in general as of those who without alteration of character cannot see, i. e. cannot enjoy the kingdom of God.

To accomplish this preparation, to produce this fitness for the celestial paradise, external means and divine agency are employed. That the former, i. e. light and moral advantages are dispensed with great variety, has been shown already: To this undeniable fact, unequal communications of divine grace would be perfectly analogous. If those influences, which God imparts to men, dissuading from vice and urging to virtue, tending to produce a radical change of character, are made to different persons in different degrees, it is strikingly similar to the

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whole of the divine proceedings, so far as they come within human observation.

It is a matter of remark, and perfectly undeniable that some individuals, whose moral advantages are comparatively small, become the subjects of deep and permanent religious impressions, abandon their former course of life with serious detestation, and subsequently maintain a course of conspicuous piety. It is equally notorious, that some individuals, of no unusual perverseness of natural temper, enjoy through life the highest advantages for religious improvement, who give not the smallest evidence of possessing the Christian character; nor manifest any serious regard to a future life.

Is it irrational to suppose that there is some cause for so great a difference? Is it reasonable to imagine that events so contrary, proceed from the same causes? And as it was shown by copious evidence, in a former lecture, that piety or real virtue does not exist in the human heart without divine culture, is not the conclusion almost forced upon us, that, in one of the cases supposed, a degree of divine power was exerted, which was not exerted in the other? That this supposition accounts for the fact, will not be denied; that it is suported by the analogy of divine distribution, has been shown; and that any other very satisfactory account can be given will scarcely be asserted.

It has been observed, that whatever may in time be done consistently with the divine character, might have been predetermined from eternity. If in the favours which he bestows, it is just in the divine Being to make discriminations, it was not unjust in him to determine on this before the foundation of the world.

We cannot consistently with any rational ideas of God suppose, that in regard to him, there can be any thing new or unforeseen. He has neither more knowledge nor wisdom at present, than he had before eternal ages. Therefore, no reasons can be now discerned, inclining him to a particular course of proceeding, which were not previously discerned. The plan of his government is eternal, like himself.

I now request you to notice an obvious and indisputable fact,

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viz. that some men are, and some are not brought to salvation. Therefore, in regard to some men, it is not true, that they are placed in that situation, and are subjects of such degrees of divine influence, as actually bring them to salvation. Did God ever determine to place them in those circumstances, and operate on them with such divine power as would ensure an event which does not in fact, and never will take place? Again, in regard to those, who are actually saved, it is true, that they are placed in that situation, and are subjects of those degrees of divine influence, which actually brings them to piety and eternal life. Therefore, the situation, these degrees of influence, and the happy result, were predetermined.

It is important here, that we notice a distinction between what men will in fact do under those religious means, and with those divine communications, which they enjoy, and what they might do, were they not hindered by voluntary perverseness. We by no means say, that God is determined to produce, in any person, that impenitence, which precedes hopeless misery. But he determines to place some in such or such a condition, although he clearly foresees, that they will remain impenitent, and incur perdition.

To prevent, if possible, all misapprehension, I would resort to the following illustration: Some men, it is well known, who are habitually intemperate, do actually reform. Other persons of similar character, do not. Of these latter persons, is it not perfectly absurd to say, that Deity ever determined to place them in that condition, to give them such faithful advisers, or to impose on them such restraints, as would in fact produce a reform? Whereas, of the other class this is perfectly true. But though God does see fit to put them in those circumstances without which he knows they will not repent, it is perfectly consistent that he should desire their repentance, in those circumstances in which he actually places them.

It may perhaps be inquired, whether, on the part of God, all is done which is proper, for the salvation of each person? I answer that all, which is proper on the part of God, is doubtless

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performed; and I apprehend, that so much is done for each person, as to render him perfectly inexcusable for rejecting what are to him the conditions of salvation. Yet it must be acknowledged, that the same is not done for all. Deity has done far less for the salvation of pagans, than for that of nominal believers. No person, capable of reflection, would assert, that he, who has received the best, and he, who has received the worst education, are in a condition, equally favourable to present virtue and future glory.

Though the wicked will perish for obstinately resisting and rejecting the light which they have; yet it must be conceded, with regard to some, that had they possessed that degree of light and influence, which has been granted to some others, they would by repentance, have secured salvation: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works, which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, in sackcloth and ashes.

But, at the same time, another doctrine seems here to be established; viz. that equal degrees of light and influence are not at a given time necessary to effect the conversion of all sinners. That grace which was rejected at Bethsaida, would have been effectual, had it been enjoyed at Tyre and Sidon. Or, in other words, that grace, which would have been effectual at Tyre and Sidon, was rejected at Bethsaida.

It is by no means to be imagined, that in distributing variously the blessings of his providence and grace, God acts capriciously. When we say that he is a sovereign, we are far from meaning, that he is not perpetually under the influence of his wisdom. In every instance, he has the best reason for diversifying his dispensations. That these reasons are not discerned by us, can be matter of a moment's surprise to no person, who reflects on the extent of God's empire, and considers the unlimited number of interests, which must under such a government, be consulted.

The difficulties, which are often felt in view of the subject we are considering, arise, it is believed, in no inconsiderable de-

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gree, from viewing human degeneracy, rather as a misfortune than as a crime. The account which revelation gives of the matter is this: We have voluntarily departed from God, and are so perversely inclined, that independently of divine operation, we shall never choose the path of virtue and glory. There is no impediment to the salvation of a wicked man but the want of a right inclination towards his duty. The dishonest or profane man may as well complain of his Maker, for not inducing him to relinquish his immoral habits, as the sinner can complain of God for not inducing him to repent. Nor could the latter complain of the unequal distributions of divine grace, with more justice or decency, than could the wretch, who had been injuring you through his whole life complain, that although you had very frequently endeavored to reconcile him to you, there was some other person of similar character, with whom you had been more urgent.

To cite but one additional instance by way of illustration,—however detestable in the view of God were the crimes of Cain and of Judas, it is most evident, that He did not, and therefore never determined to prevent the first from slaughtering his brother; nor the second from betraying his master. We say not that they were necessitated to commit these crimes; we make no decision at present, whether their abstinence under circumstances existing would not have been more agreeable to the divine will. The extent of what we assert is this; that he never determined on his part to do that which would in fact prevent them. In like manner, He never determined to bring to salvation them who are actually lost. This is perfectly undeniable, whatever may become of those points which are at issue between the abettors of free will, and those of necessity.

Some further remarks on the subject will compose the next lecture.

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LECTURE XLV.

ELECTION.

Agreeably to what was intimated in the last lecture, the present will consist of some further remarks, designed to elucidate the subject of election.

1. In pursuance of this design, I request you to notice the two following propositions. That there is demerit in vice; or to vary the expression, that all wicked men are criminal for being such; and that the appointment of a Saviour was matter of benignity and not of obligation.

As to the first proposition, that there is demerit in vice, and that all wicked men are criminal for being such, it is so clear that every person, it is probable, will, at first sight, yield full assent. For, if there be not demerit in vice, there is either demerit in virtue, or else there is no such thing as demerit in the universe.

But, however readily the understanding may assent to the proposition, either its bearings and relations are not duly considered, or else the sentiments of the heart disagree with those of the intellect. Human degeneracy is often considered rather as a misfortune than as a crime. And sinners are viewed, as more entitled to pity, than as meriting punishment.

The other proposition, viz. That the appointment of a Saviour was matter of benignity and not of obligation, usually meets a reception, much like that which has just been mentioned. In words it is allowed, but its import is not felt. The Scriptures use a language on the subject, which cannot be mistaken. They assert the justice of that condemnation, which had passed on all men; and attribute the intervention of Christ to the compassion, the generosity, if I may be allowed the

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expression, of the supreme Being. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All like sheep have gone astray. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who should stand? Every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world shall appear guilty before God. The Father is represented as so loving, i. e. so pitying the world, as to send his Son. Those who are saved, are said to be vessels of mercy; and their recovery is ascribed to that God, who is rich in mercy. Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. Now, if all wicked men are criminal for being such, and the appointment of a Saviour were matter of benignity, and not of obligation, our race would have had no right to demand a dispensation similar to that of the Gospel, and of course no right to complain, had no such purpose been concerted. Further, if it were not a matter of obligation in Deity to provide a Saviour for any, he could not be under obligation to make such provision for all. Therefore, if Jesus Christ had died for a part of mankind only, the remainder would have sought in vain for cause of complaint. I am far however from considering, as fact, the thing which is here supposed. I am far from doubting, that Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, and that his atonement would be as sufficient for all, would all repent, as it is for those who are reduced to penitence. But even if it were otherwise, the justice of God would not be liable to impeachment. Scarce any thing can be more clear than that creatures lying under just condemnation can have no claim to redemption.

The question directly before us, however, you will observe, does not relate to the extent of our Saviour's atonement, but the extent to which God designs to render this atonement effectual. This atonement is effectual in regard to every one, who repents and obeys the Christian religion. There is no impediment to the salvation of a wicked man, but the want of a right inclination towards his duty. We are however so perversely inclined, that independently of divine operation, we shall never choose the path of virtue and glory. While such is the propensity of the heart,

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while disobedience is an affair of our own choosing, can blame be transferred from us to our Maker, because he does not destroy this pernicious taste, and direct the current of our desires into a different channel? The dishonest or profane man, as was observed in the last lecture, may as well complain of God for not inducing him to relinquish his immoral habits, as the sinner can complain of not being induced to repent. Nor could the latter with more truth or decency, charge with injustice the unequal distributions of divine grace, than could the wretch, who had been injuring you through his whole life, complain, that though you had very frequently endeavoured to reconcile him to yourself and his duty, there was some other person of similar character to his own, with whom you had been more urgent.

Should it be asked, why all men are not treated with equal lenity, or equal severity, I answer, that while each creature in the universe has a right to claim justice, no one can demand a favor; and the answer which the householder is represented as returning to the querulous labourers, is precisely applicable to the case in question: Friend, I do thee no wrong: Have I not a right to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?

If persons, who believe either the Scriptures, or the moral government of God, propose this objection, they ought not to forget, that themselves are as truly concerned in its removal, as are those who believe the doctrine now under discussion. For it was shown, in the last lecture, that Deity bestows his favors with unlimited variety. Why has God given to one being the nature of an angel, and to another the nature of a man? Why has he given to some animals existence but for a few months, and to others for a hundred years? Why are talents bestowed on some men, raising them far above the standard of our species, while others are depressed as far below it? Why have the lines fallen to part of mankind in the land of darkness and shadow of death; while others enjoy the clear light of science and religion? Why have some of the wisest and most upright men been constrained to waste their lives in the damps, the

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darkness, and solitude of a prison, while profligate tyrants have been at liberty to corrupt, or to enslave men, and to set at open defiance the justice of heaven? Or, to use the words of the poet:

> "Why unassuming worth in secret lived,
> And died neglected: why the good man's share
> In life was gall and bitterness of soul:
> Why the lone widow, and her orphans pin'd
> In starving solitude; while luxury,
> In palaces, lay straining her low thought,
> To form unreal wants; why heaven-born truth,
> And moderation fair, wore the red marks
> Of superstition's scourge: why licens'd pain,
> That cruel spoiler, that embosom'd foe,
> Imbittered all our bliss."—*Thomson.*

When any person shall give a satisfactory answer to all these inquiries, he may, with less impropriety, demand the reason why communications of celestial grace are not made to all in the same measure?

It is by no means to be imagined, that in distributing variously the blessings either of providence or grace, the Almighty acts arbitrarily, or with caprice. As has been heretofore remarked, when it is said that God is a sovereign,—that he does all things according to the counsel of his own will,—and that he has mercy on whom he will have mercy, we are not to imagine, that he acts merely because he has the power of acting, or that his choice is not regulated by perfect wisdom. No being in the universe is more invariably confined, so to speak, by the rules of fitness and propriety. Herein consists the perfection and dignity of his character. By the sovereignty of God is meant nothing more, than that his reasons for acting are concealed from human observation. Reasons always exist in the divine mind, why the gifts of providence and grace are bestowed with greater liberality on one, than on another. Perhaps some of these reasons are made known to the spirits of just men made perfect. Perhaps the subject is still further understood by the angels:—

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and as the capacities of both are enlarged, and as they advance in their acquaintance with the great plan of divine government, the number and cogency of apparent reasons will perpetually increase.

2. It may be natural to inquire, whether God gives to some small portions of divine influence, with design, that they should not repent. To this inquiry an affirmative answer could not, I think, with safety be rendered. I know of no reason to doubt, that the repentance and conversion of the non-elect under those circumstances, in which they are placed, would be agreeable to the mind of God: nor do I perceive, on any other supposition, how those numerous declarations of Scripture, which express the divine reluctance to abandon and punish sinners, can be reconciled with perfect integrity: Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord? Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. At a time when the crimes of Israel were such as to require severe chastisements, the language of God was full of benignity and forbearance. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me. My repentings are kindled together? Christ asserts, that he would often have gathered the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but they would not: and exclaims: O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace: but now they are hid from thine eyes. Now, all this is perfectly intelligible, if the repentance of these persons, under existing circumstances, would have been agreeable to the mind of God. On this supposition, there is unquestionable sincerity in the declarations cited.

It is not pretended, however, that all difficulties are yet removed. It has been asserted, you say, that there are persons to whom God never determined to give those advantages and influences of grace, which would in fact issue in their reformation. If this be true, the Jews, to whom the preceding quotations re-

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fer, were doubtless of that number. Now, if God never determined to give them such divine influence, and place them in such circumstances, as would in fact produce reformation, how can it be said, that such an event would have been agreeable to the divine will?

I answer, that whatever may be the consequence of the first position, its truth will not be denied by any one, who considers for a moment, the absurdity, which such denial embraces. Would you assert; or would any person in the free use of his rational powers assert, that God did give to the inhabitants of Jerusalem such powerful influences of his Spirit, or placed them in such circumstances, as actually produced a change of character, and saved them from ruin? And if he did not this, it will hardly be said that he ever determined to do it.

We will now endeavor to show that his not resorting to greater efforts, than were employed for reforming the Jews, was perfectly consistent with divine admonitions, and with an inclination that they should repent. A parent, let it be supposed, gives to his son those advantanges, which if rightly improved, would secure to him a competent knowledge of the arts and sciences. He at the same time being perfectly acquainted with the disposition of the latter, knows, that unless these advantages are doubled, or altogether changed in kind, the effect will not be produced,—the desired acquisition will not be made. Now there may be a thousand reasons, to prevent him from increasing the number of these advantages, or altering their kind. Perhaps this could not be done consistently with justice to his other children. Still it would be perfectly agreeable to his wishes that the son to whom we refer, should be skilled in the arts and sciences. Nor would any one call in question, that such was the father's desire, although for good reasons he did not see fit to afford those greater advantages, without which he foresaw, that the end would not be obtained.

Here you will see the necessity of recurring to a distinction, made in the last lecture, between what a person might do, and what he actually will do. The son, mentioned in our sup-

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position, is placed in such situation, as to render attainable the contemplated degree of information; but through a wrong temper, he will not in fact make the acquirement, unless the facility of doing it is greatly increased. In the same manner, nothing prevents the non-elect from repentance and salvation, but perverseness of temper;—disaffection to the character of God. Why then should it be doubted, that their conversion would be agreeable to his will, because he affords not those more powerful communications, without which he foresees, they will remain irreligious?

There is one point, in which it may be supposed, that the cases are so dissimilar, as to render inconclusive all reasoning from the one to the other. The earthly parent is limited in his power. All means are not at his command. To increase the scientific advantages of his son, might, as has been suggested, be injurious to his other children. But the power of God is unlimited: and therefore, you suppose, he can be under no restraint.

It is true, that the power of God is the greatest that can be conceived. In regard to him, nothing is physically impossible, but what implies a contradiction; and nothing is morally impossible, but what is inconsistent with his wisdom and goodness. It is not derogatory to the power of God, to assert, that he cannot render the same beings at the same time both happy and miserable; or that he cannot create beings in the same sense both rational and irrational. And it is so far from being injurious to his character, to assert, that he can do nothing opposite to wisdom or benevolence, that on this account alone his character demands supreme reverence and affection.

So very small a portion of God's great scheme of government is subject to human investigation, and so little is known of the dependence, which one part has on another, that in relation to a thousand measures, we cannot pronounce with the least certainty, whether they would, or would not be consistent with divine wisdom, or with that vast, universal, and complicated scheme, which God is carrying into effect. For the same

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reason we cannot be certain, that to impart greater light or more powerful divine influences, than are imparted to each individual, would not be inconsistent with that system of proceeding, which God has adopted for the promotion of general order and happiness. In this way may divine power be circumscribed; i. e. it may be limited by physical impossibilities, or by that wisdom and goodness, which are essential to the divine character.

If there be any obscurity in this reasoning, it will probably be lessened by recurring to particular facts. What is the cause, why Deity does not reduce that enormous quantity of pain, which is endured by mortals? As the sufferings of men cannot in themselves considered, be agreeable to a benevolent being, is it not certain, that God would diminish or remove those sufferings, were there not, all things considered, good reasons for their continuance? These reasons then are the limitations of divine power?—they are a kind of restriction, from which even the Almighty is not exempt.

To put a case still more to the point, Why does not God, whose nature is infinitely pure, and to whom nothing is so hateful as moral evil, prevent all the crimes which are committed among men? This will not be attributed to the want of physical power, of wisdom, or of goodness. There must, therefore, be some reason in the view of God, why an effectual effort is not made for the suppression or extermination of vice. No one can doubt, that those reasons, which Deity esteems weighty, are such in reality. Here again we see what may be considered as limits of the divine power: and hence it appears, that the supposition, which has been made relative to an earthly parent, was not inadequate to the purpose for which it was introduced; seeing, that there may be restrictions in either case.

Further, when any person will assign reasons, why the sufferings and the vices of men are not diminished or prevented, it will be no difficult matter to show, why those more powerful communications of grace are not imparted, without which, it is distinctly foreseen, that the impenitent will not be renewed.

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Whatever reasoning is inconsistent with fact, must, of course be inconclusive. Whenever an objection is urged against a doctrine, and it can be shown, that the objection lies with equal force against acknowledged truth, such objection is thereby sufficiently removed. Now it is a fact of every day's observation, that immoral men do not abandon their vices: nor does Deity see fit to operate so effectually on their hearts, as to secure their reformation. Yet his language is: Break off your sins by righteousness, and your iniquities by turning unto the Lord. You may as well ask, why, if there be sincerity in this declaration, God does not interpose, effectually to reclaim every dishonest, indolent, disorderly, or impious person, as why he does not effect the conversion of all, whom he urges to repentance.

3. The view which we have taken of the doctrine of election shows how destitute of solidity is a very popular remark, which is often made on this subject. It is this: If we are ordained to be saved, we can never be lost: and, on the contrary, if we are ordained to be lost, we can never be saved. Therefore all attention to the subject will be unavailing. In other words, if God is determined to afford me such degrees of spiritual influence, as will produce conversion, I am secure; if not, anxiety will be fruitless.

The thief and the liar may, with as much propriety, adopt this language, in relation to their particular vices, as any sinner could speak thus in regard to a more general change of character. They might say, If it is the purpose of God to reclaim us from our habits, we are secure: if not, vain will be our efforts either to avoid theft, or to speak the truth. And if the observation would, in the latter case, appear both impertinent and absurd, why should it in the former, be viewed more favorably?

A few remarks will close the lecture.

1. It does by no means follow, from the doctrine which has been stated, that God has rendered necessary, the sin and consequent perdition of men. The angels who retain their primitive state are called elect angels: but does this imply that the others were under the necessity of apostatizing? The latter are

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now reprobates without hope; and God, before they were created knew that they would become such. Yet their defection originated with themselves, and resulted not from the agency of that immaculate Being to whom moral evil is supremely odious. Neither the subject under consideration, nor any passages of Scripture when rightly understood, justify men, in imputing to their Creator, either their impenitence or their final ruin? Men do not sin because they are impelled to it; but are reprobated because they sin and refuse the remedy, which Christianity offers.

2. Though many of the decrees of God are concealed from human research, there is one, of which no person even slightly versed in Scripture, can remain ignorant. It is this: Without holiness no man can see the Lord. If you have the Christian character, you have the mark of election: For whom he foreknew, them he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. And whoever is thus predestinated to piety, the apostle assures us, will eventually enjoy everlasting life. On the contrary, while destitute of piety, you have the present marks of reprobation. The evidence of being chosen of God, is just in proportion to those moral qualities, which distinguish his servants. It is only by a life of circumspection and active virtue that Christians can perceive and enjoy the evidence of their belonging to that number for whom a kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world. It is by diligence that their calling and election is made sure: If ye do these things, saith the apostle, ye shall never fall; but an abundant entrance shall be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom and joy of your Lord.

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LECTURE XLVI.

RESURRECTION.

Though in contemplating human mortality our first anxiety is naturally, and with good reason, directed to the intellectual part of our natures, it is impossible to avoid all anticipation of that change, which death produces in the human body. As the body has been our constant companion from the first moment of our being until the present time; as it has been the medium, through which many pains and many pleasures have been communicated; as its preservation has engrossed so considerable a portion of our thoughts; it is by no means surprising, that a kind of dread is excited, at looking forward to the time, when all its functions shall cease, when its parts shall be separated, and when it shall be concealed in the earth, to prevent it from being either injurious or offensive to the living.

Though, without revelation, it would not occur to man, that his body would be re-organized and revived, the thought, whenever suggested, could scarcely fail of meeting the most cordial welcome. The desire of existence is universal. And though this desire is peculiarly strong in relation to the soul, it extends with no inconsiderable power to the body.

Our present attention will be directed to that doctrine which teaches the resurrection of the dead.

Though the Stoics believed, that certain revolving periods would produce successive renovations in the system of the universe, it does not appear, that any tenet, similar to the Christian doctrine of a resurrection was believed, or even known, among the pagan philosophers. However congenial this doctrine is to the native feelings of man, the opinion, which some

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of these philosophers entertained as to the inherent malignity of matter, and its influence in contaminating the soul, would have led them to view an eternal separation from it, as a thing more desirable than a permanent reunion. When certain Epicureans and Stoics at Athens heard St. Paul discourse of Jesus and the resurrection, they treated him contemptuously; observing that he seemed to be a proclaimer of foreign deities; not understanding, as it is believed by very learned commentators, the term which is translated resurrection; but conceiving that ἀνάστασις, as well as Ἰησοῦς, was represented by St. Paul, as an object of worship.

The doctrine of a resurrection was not expressly taught to the Jews by their inspired lawgiver.

There is but one passage of Scripture, I suppose, which will be thought to militate with this remark. It is found in the 22d chapter of Matthew. On a certain occasion, the Sadducees, who denied not only the resurrection, but the existence of angels and spirits, came to our Saviour with design to perplex him, by asking, to whom would belong, in the resurrection, the woman, who had been wife to seven brethren. Jesus, having first answered, that in the resurrection there is neither marrying, nor giving in marriage, adds: But, as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

As our Saviour's interpretations of Scripture are infallible, and as he here refers to a passage in the writings of Moses, in proof of the resurrection, it may be objected, that one passage, at least, in these writings, teaches this doctrine.

The assertion which we have made, you will observe, is only, that this doctrine was not by Moses expressly taught. That it was taught by implication, I neither affirm nor deny. Let any one revolve in his mind these words: I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and he will, I apprehend, hardly profess himself able to discern, how

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they directly prove, that the dead will be raised. At the time, when the words were uttered, the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead; no language, therefore, could be designed to prove them alive.

The Sadducees, it has been observed, denied the future existence of the soul; and this was probably their principal reason for denying the resurrection. Our Lord, it seems, aimed to prove the former of these, in order that he might remove their objections against the latter. God called himself, says he, in the time of Moses, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But he would not call himself the God of any not living. Therefore, these patriarchs were then living. Now, though this conclusion could be applied only to the soul; yet as the Sadducees denied the future existence of the soul, to prove such existence was much to his purpose. If there had been any other passage in the books of Moses, more directly proving the resurrection of the body, this it may fairly be presumed, would not have been cited: and, if there be none, it will hardly be pretended, I think, that the doctrine is expressly taught in these books. In our Saviour's time, however, the resurrection of the body was believed by many among the Jews. This opinion was held, it appears, by the sect of the Pharisees. For, when it is said of the Sadducees, that they deny the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits, it is added: But the Pharisees confess both. And when Jesus said to Martha: Thy brother shall rise again, she replied: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

This opinion was probably collected from a number of passages in the prophetical writings: Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye, that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead. If this passage is designed to be taken literally, it distinctly proves a resurrection of the body. But if it is figurative, intended to foreshow the restoration of the Jews, still without supposing some knowledge of the doctrine, we should hardly expect, that such a figure would

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be used. A similar remark will apply to the well known passage in Ezekiel, in which is mentioned the valley of dry bones. After the vision, the prophet was directed to say: Behold, O my people, I will open your graves and cause you to come out of your graves. Another more striking passage is found in Daniel: And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. In the 19th chapter of Job, we have language, the apparent import of which strongly favors the doctrine in question.

In the Septuagint version, which was commonly used by the Jewish nation, in our Saviour's time, we find a remarkable addition to the last verse of the book of Job: So Job died, being old and full of days; but it is written, that he shall rise again, with those, whom the Lord raises up. This last clause, whether it be part of the original book, or not, proves only, that whenever the passage was written, some ideas were entertained as to a resurrection.

It is not my present purpose to inquire, whether in all, or any of the passages, cited from our English version, the literal and obvious meaning is the true one. I only remark, that it must have been from such passages, as these, whether rightly or wrongly explained, that the doctrine of a resurrection had, obtained so considerable a currency, among the Jews, even before the introduction of Christianity.

In the apocryphal writings, there is a remarkable passage, showing, that on the minds of some, this doctrine had the most powerful practical influence. When the seven brethren were tormented by the impious Antiochus, for not violating their law, one of them is represented as saying: The king of the world shall raise us up, who have died for laws, unto everlasting life. Speaking of the members of his body: These, saith he, I have received from heaven, and for his laws I despise them; and from him I hope to receive them again.

But whatever may be our opinion as to the degree of evidence, afforded by the ancient dispensation in support of the doc-

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time, the divine author of Christianity has, in the largest sense: brought life and immortality to light. He has shown not only, that the grave cannot confine the soul, but even, that the body shall be set free from its bondage.

This expectation it appears was observed by the pagan enemies of the Gospel as the cause why Christians so willingly and courageously encountered death. And it was with design to frustrate this hope, that their persecutors consumed their bodies, and scattered their ashes in the rivers.

The importance, which Christianity attaches to this doctrine, is asserted by St. Paul, in very strong terms: If the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. This reasoning the apostle repeats in a following verse.

We now proceed to notice those texts in the New Testament, by which the doctrine in discussion is directly proved: This is the will of him, that sent me, that every one, that seeth the Son and believeth on him, should have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.—The hour cometh when they who are in their graves, shall hear the voice of God and come forth.—If the spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he, that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken, that is, make alive, your mortal bodies.—As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. The former part of this sentence expresses the death of the body; the latter part, its revival. There shall be, saith the same apostle: a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. St. John, as appears from the revelation, had a vision of: the dead, both small and great, standing before God.—Even we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit the redemption of the body.

That this doctrine implies no impossibility, is apparent, both from the nature of the case, and from particular facts.

I. From the nature of the case. He, who creates, must be able to renew. He, who first collected and united the various parts of the human body, and organized them according to his

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pleasure, can never want power to recompose and revive the same body. The substance of the human frame is collected from the air and water, from vegetables and from other animals. Vegetables, produced in one quarter of the globe, unite with those, which are reared in another, to increase its vigor, and advance its growth. Particles of these bodies, which we now possess once belonged, it may be, to distant islands and continents: they once passed into the canes of India, or were suspended from the fig trees of Turkey. Were the mass thus composed once dissolved, would either more power or more wisdom be required for the reunion of its parts, than was employed in its original formation or its subsequent support? St. Paul's appeal to Agrippa was therefore unanswerable: Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

II. The possibility of the resurrection has been proved from particular facts. Three persons were raised from the dead by our Saviour; Dorcas, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus. Jesus himself rose from the grave. At his death many bodies of saints, that slept, arose, and went into the holy city and appeared to many.

There can be no more difficulty in restoring to life one body, than another; and it is absurd to speak of the impossibility of an event which has already happened.

Our next inquiry is, concerning those bodies, to which the soul shall be united.

I. The language of Scripture leads us to consider them as the same with those which the soul inhabited previously to death: If the spirit of him, that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he, that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies. Here the revived body is declared to be that mortal body, which was the original tenement of the soul. To the same purpose is the passage, already cited: They, who are in their graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth. As nothing but the body is left in the grave, nothing else can come forth out of it. That body

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which was raised, is the same, therefore, which was deposited in the grave.

Further, we are told by St. Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, that at the resurrection: this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality. The word body is doubtless to be here supplied. The meaning must therefore be: This corruptible body shall be incorruptible, and this mortal body shall become immortal. Hence you perceive, that the body which existed before death, is represented as existing afterwards, notwithstanding the great change which it must undergo. It is the same body, though in one case mortal, and in the other immortal.

A similar mode of expression is continued through the chapter: It is sown a mortal body: it is raised a spiritual body. As the pronoun it must have the same reference in both these clauses, identity is predicated of the body at both these periods.

But though we are justified by these Scriptures, in saying, that the body raised shall be the same with that deposited, we are not under the necessity of concluding, that it will consist of the same numerical parts. When the saints shall arise we cannot rationally believe, that their bodies will be marked by the diseases, of which they died. We cannot suppose, that bodies will then be seen, enlarged by dropsy, or emaciated by consumption; or that those, who died after having lost some parts of the body, will appear with this defect, when they shall be raised again.

If you ask, how the raised body can be the same, which died, unless it consists of the same numerical parts, I answer, that there is no reason to think, that the apostle was more rigid in the use of language, than other writers; or that he comprehended more than others, in the term identity. Now it is well known, that our bodies, while living, are continually undergoing a change. Particles are constantly going off and new ones are added. Yet we do not consider, that corporeal identity is here-

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by destroyed. If it were, the body of no living person would continue the same for two hours. One tree does not, either by age or growth, become another. The full grown elm is the tree, which its possessor once transplanted. Now, if such changes, either in vegetable or animal bodies, do not destroy identity, neither will the sameness of the human body be destroyed, because some particles are either lost or added.

The following objection is sometimes made to the doctrine, under discussion. Particles of a human body may, after death, constitute part of a vegetable; and this again may be incorporated with another human body. Two persons, therefore, may, at different periods, die in possession of the same particles. But, that two bodies should, at the same time, viz. at the resurrection, have the same particles, is an absurdity.

To this objection we return a twofold answer. 1. If the same numerical parts were necessary, to constitute the same body; as it has been divinely declared, that the same bodies shall rise, the wisdom and veracity of God would be engaged to prevent the occurrence, here contemplated.

But 2. If, as we have endeavored to show, all the same numerical parts are not essential to the same body, the objection ceases to have any weight.

Though the body after the resurrection will be greatly changed from what it previously was, the Scriptures authorize us to speak of it as the same body. How great a change may be produced without destroying the propriety of this language, it would not be easy to define. Such language as the Scriptures contain, would not, I think, be used, however, if the renewed body contained none of the parts, which the mortal body possessed. Without this, it would hardly be said, that those who are in their graves will come forth; that these bodies shall be quickened; and that this mortal shall put on immortality.

But whatever may be the addition or diminution of parts, that there will be a great change in appearance and qualities, is certain: Though sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; though sown in dishonor, it shall be raised in glory; though

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sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body: Instead of that imbecility, in which mortal bodies participate, its members shall be complete, active, and vigorous. Instead of that humble, ghastly, or deformed state, in which the body appears, when deposited in the earth, it shall be raised glorious in beauty. Instead of an animal body, having passions, and appetites, and wants, suited to the present material state, it shall become spiritual and refined, free from gross incumbrances, and from those appetites, which are hostile to intellectual and moral improvement.

There is reason to believe, that the bodies of saints will at the resurrection, be covered with a celestial splendor. This is proved not only by that passage in St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, already quoted, but likewise from other passages in both parts of the sacred volume: They that are wise, saith Daniel, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever: To this the words of our Saviour have a remarkable resemblance: Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. This splendid body will, it appears, resemble that which is possessed by our Lord in glory. Their vile bodies shall be changed, saith the apostle, and fashioned like unto his glorious body.

What kind of change is here meant, we may perhaps form some idea by certain facts which the Scriptures record. So intense was the splendor of Moses' countenance, when he descended from the mount, that the children of Israel could not endure it. The spectators, who witnessed the martyrdom of Stephen, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel. Such, but more glorious, was the appearance of our Saviour at his transfiguration: His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment became white and glistering; exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them.

As further evidence of the change, which will be produced in the human body, it is said, that: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither can corruption inherit incorruption.

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From this passage, it is further evident, that by the identity of the mortal and immortal body, the apostle did not design to exclude a very essential alteration. But, that this change is both possible and real, we are taught by the ascension of Christ. His body was raised from the grave, a material body. It was sensible to the touch. It was handled by Thomas. It was nourished by food. This body ascended from earth, and was received into heaven. Still, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. In the act of ascending, a change was therefore produced; and it became that which the apostle calls Christ's glorious body. Agreeably to this the same apostle informs us, that when the last trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, those who are alive and remain will not die, but will all be instantly changed.

When we consider the sudden and wonderful changes, which are produced in substances, by chemical application; and that opaque bodies are by such application, rendered translucent, I know not, that in regard to Enoch, Elijah, our Saviour, and those who shall be living at the day of judgment, there is any necessity to deny, that the very same particles compose their bodies both before and after this mighty change.

In regard to the change, to be produced at the resurrection, in the bodies of wicked men, we have little or no information. As the bodies of saints will be immortal and incorruptible, so, we have reason to believe, will be the bodies of the wicked. In that glory and splendor, which will beautify the former, the latter cannot partake. This would ill agree with that shame and everlasting contempt, to participate which, they shall be roused from the slumbers of the tomb. When the doctrine of a resurrection is mentioned in Scripture, it is usually in application to the righteous. Though this suited the design of the sacred writers, the universality of a resurrection is left in no uncertainty. In the words of our Saviour already cited, we are taught, that all who are in their graves, shall come forth, not only: They who have done well, to the resurrection of life; but they, who have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. And Paul,

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when brought before Felix, states it as an important part of his preaching, that: There will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and of the unjust.

Our future bodies, it appears, will be, as our present are, the channel through which pleasure or pain will be conveyed to the mind: Fear him, saith our Lord, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. This destruction of the soul and body can mean nothing but their punishment. In this therefore the body will partake; or rather, it shall be the medium, through which the mind shall suffer. The greatest possible degrees of that pain which living bodies are capable of enduring, is happily known but to few. What intense agonies may be endured by immortal, incorruptible bodies, can be conceived by none before the day of judgment. Each one of the senses may be an inlet to misery; and pain may be seated in every member.—To use the powerful language of inspiration: It may come into their bowels like water, and like oil into their bones.

And if the various parts of those bodies, which shall be restored to reprobates, will be the medium of suffering, it is analogous, that the bodies of just men made perfect, should be restored to them for an opposite purpose. Though such parts of the body, as are calculated merely for an earthly state, can have no use, and will probably have no existence in the celestial world; it is by no means absurd to suppose, that a refined system of matter, resembling the glorified body of Jesus Christ, may become the vehicle of enjoyment.

Hence it is, I conceive, that the intermediate state between death and the resurrection, though clearly taught in Scripture, is sparingly mentioned. When the sacred writers speak of a retribution, they generally refer to the day of judgment: When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. The first epistle to the Thessalonians is so remarkable for its frequent allusions to the day of Christ's appearing, and for omitting all mention of any previous retribution, as to lead some to conclude, though

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very unjustly, that the apostle either viewed the day of judgment as nigh at hand, or else believed, that the soul would remain insensible, until that period.

I close this lecture with a few remarks.

When we survey, or cherish these bodies, which we now possess, let us anticipate the changes, for which they are destined. They will soon be sown in dishonor. Of all portions of matter, they will be most offensive and most unpleasant to the sight. To use the language of Isaiah: the worm shall be spread under them, and worms shall cover them. Still shall these bodies, in myriads, rise immortal from the ground. They shall burst forth into new and endless existence.

While this consideration is most joyous to all the disciples of Him, who is the resurrection and the life, it is fraught with alarm and terror to the impenitent. At present, whatever pain is violent, cannot be of long duration. The human frame is soon overcome by its intensity.

But the bodies of the wicked will be raised immortal and indissoluble: and thus prepared for all the sufferings, which a righteous God has reserved for them. There will then be no hopes of annihilation to allay the fears of those, who now set themselves against the moral government of the most High. Their existence and their misery will be alike interminable.

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LECTURE XLVII.

ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

It is my design, in submission to divine Providence, to deliver, during the present term, a few lectures on the duration of future punishment.

In our inquiries, whether this duration be temporary or endless, few persons, accustomed to contemplate the subject, will deny, that the Scriptures are the chief source, from which arguments are to be obtained. The reason is obvious. By the light of nature we are left in great uncertainty, as to the general doctrine of a future state. Without revealed religion, it could never be placed beyond reasonable doubt, that the soul of man survives the body. I do not deny the plausibility, and the real value of those arguments independent of revelation, which have been brought in favor of this doctrine. I do not question their sufficiency to render the doctrine in a good degree probable, and clearly to show, that the contrary is not certain. But, to render a doctrine probable, is one thing, and clearly to prove it is another. Now, if the future existence of the soul cannot be clearly proved without revelation, much less can its eternal existence. If eternal existence could be proved, it would not hence follow, that there will be any happiness; as all claims to this are forfeited by sin. But were the future existence of happiness ascertained, the terms, on which it might be secured, would still be unknown. While all these questions remain unanswered without supernatural instruction, it can hardly be imagined, that the light of nature will enable us to ascertain, either the degree, or duration of future punishment. Nothing, therefore, can be more absurd, than to discard the Scriptures, with a

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view to support the doctrine of universal salvation. If that doctrine be not found in the Bible, it is found no where. Many inquiries of extreme importance and difficulty must be settled by the unbeliever in revelation, before he comes to the question of eternal, and universal happiness.

I would further observe, that the subject in hand is far too important and solemn to be treated with declamation, instead of argument. If the doctrine of endless punishment be evidently false, as those, who declaim against it, would have us believe, to prove its falsity by argument can surely require no great labor. When this is done, declamation will be more in season.

An additional remark is this,—should the doctrine of eternal punishment appear supported by Scripture, it will, by no means, be a sufficient reason for rejecting it, that the idea, which it suggests, is gloomy; or that we may not be able to see the good purposes, which it will accomplish under the divine government. I readily grant, that the thought of endless existence in misery is terrific and overwhelming. But it must be remembered, that many events in the present state, the existence of which cannot be denied, are extremely different from the ideas, which human creatures would have previously formed. To our limited understanding it would appear, that from a system, produced by an infinitely powerful, and benevolent God, all natural and moral evil ought to have been excluded. Yet the lives of some individuals appear to be an unbroken series of disappointment, disaster, and suffering. Cities are sometimes desolated by pestilence, ingulfed by an earthquake, or overwhelmed by inundation. Wars have, within a few years, laid waste the fairest countries of Europe. Collect in your imagination all the evil, which has resulted to the human race, in the different ages and nations of the world, from poverty, sickness, wounds, fear, anger, despair, malice, and revenge; from more general calamities, such as tyranny, anarchy, famines, contagious diseases, and national feuds; you perceive at once what an immense mass of wretchedness might thus be formed. No person, I think, will hesitate to grant, that authentic history presents to the mind, a

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vast variety of gloomy ideas; and that the actual state of the world is, and ever has been extremely different from what might have been anticipated, considering the character of its author. But notwithstanding this, no theist imagines, that there is, in truth, any inconsistency between the present seemingly disjointed state of things, and the natural and moral perfections of God. No one doubts, that in some way or other, the permission of moral, and the positive infliction of natural evil, is reconcilable with perfect wisdom, benevolence, and power; and, by consequence, that the only reason, why these things appear to us inconsistent with supreme benevolence and wisdom, is our ignorance of the divine system of government, and our inability to see the connexion between its various parts.

Few, it is believed, deny the endless duration of future punishment from finding any deficiency of Scripture evidence on the subject. Allowing, that there is, independently of revelation, no improbability in the doctrine, few persons, I should imagine none, would deny, that the Scriptures teach it. But if there is previously a rational, and strong presumption against it, it must also, doubtless, be presumed, that those passages which have been thought to establish the doctrine, have been incorrectly explained.

On this supposition, two things would demand consideration; 1. The clearness, and force of those passages. As the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God, they must be true in the sense, in which they were spoken. And if the sense, in which they have been understood, be so clear, as to admit no reasonable doubt, the previous presumption vanishes before it. This world is in a state, it has been observed, in various respects, different from what might have been anticipated. Previously to its creation, there would have been, to creatures of our limited powers, a very strong presumption against the existence of natural and moral evil, especially in that enormous degree, in which we find them actually existing. But since disorder and sufferings do exist in the world, all previous presumption, however strong, goes for nothing. Now let it be sup-

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posed, that at a time before creation began, Deity gave to some beings, whose capacities were no greater than ours, a revelation, containing some account of the world, soon to be made. In this revelation would of course be foretold the vices and the sufferings of men. If the language, describing these evils, were explicit and forcible, and could have no other meaning, consistently with the general tenor of the revelation, and the meaning of terms, as there used, such declarations ought, by all means, to prevail against a previous presumption.

2. When we speak of presumptions either for or against an opinion, it is important to inquire, whether we have so much knowledge of the subject, as to be judges, on which side probability lies. To a child it might appear extremely improbable that a human magistrate would sentence any one to prison, to the post, or the gallows. Yet a better knowledge of the subject would lead him to perceive, that such punishment might be not only consistent with benevolence, but the result of it. And it will readily occur to every considerate person, that the inability of a child to judge of the measures of a civil magistrate is incomparably less, than the inability of men to judge of the proceedings of God.

With a view to disprove the doctrine of eternal punishment, it is common to make appeals to parental feelings. As these would be extremely injured by the idea of perpetual punishment inflicted on a child, it is argued, that such punishment must be averse to the nature of that Being, whose benevolence is far superior to that of men.

Whether this kind of reasoning can be relied on, will appear by applying it to certain facts. It is, for instance, inconsistent with paternal tenderness, to imprison a child for life, or sentence him to be executed. Yet the doing of either of these, under particular circumstances, argues no want of correct feelings in a magistrate. All men would unite in allowing, that no man could be fit for a magistrate, who should refuse to punish the assassin or highway robber. A prince should doubtless be the father of his people; but to support this character,

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would it be necessary to suffer murderers to live, and the guilty in general to go unpunished? You clearly perceive, that this apparent humanity to the guilty would issue in extensive danger and harm to the innocent.

Let us apply the reasoning to other cases, which happen more directly under the divine government? Reasoning in this way, Noah would not have expected the deluge, nor prepared for his own safety. He would have said, 'God has indeed declared his purpose of destroying all flesh from off the earth; but as such severity would be most abhorrent from paternal feelings, it is not to be imagined, that such purpose can be entertained by him, who is parent of the universe. Therefore, the divine declaration, though apparently obvious, must be explained away, or considered only as a menace, designed to produce salutary alarm.'

Now, this was probably the reasoning of the antediluvians, who were destroyed; but surely it was not the reasoning of Noah, who was saved.

In like manner, when the angels announced to Lot the approaching ruin of Sodom, he might have persuaded himself, that no such event would happen. God is the parent of men. These inhabitants of Sodom are part of his family. He is better and more full of compassion, than earthly parents. But who, among the latter, could endure, that his children should be destroyed by fire, enraged with brimstone? Therefore though the celestial messengers have threatened ruin to the city, they must have had some meaning altogether different from that which their language seems calculated to convey.

In all attempts to disprove the doctrine of endless punishment no argument perhaps is so much relied on, as that which is founded on the divine benevolence. This attribute the Scriptures extol in the strongest language.

Now, it is readily granted, that the doctrine in question, if really inconsistent with the goodness of God, cannot be defended. But though it is perfectly safe to make this concession, you must carefully consider how inadequate we are to deter-

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mine what measures the highest benevolence will dictate. This benevolence is undeniably consistent with all the sufferings, which are actually endured by men. It is consistent with that vast aggregate of evils already noticed, as having been endured, in various periods of the world, by individuals and nations: though it is far beyond our power to discern how these are made to accomplish benevolent designs. Of this we are sure, that the benevolence of God will never inflict a punishment, which justice condemns?—i. e. a punishment which is disproportionate to the offender's demerit. But such is our ignorance of the schéme of God's moral government, and the connexion, subsisting between its various parts, that we cannot determine, in regard to any given instance, that the execution of justice will be inconsistent with benevolence. In civil governments, there are many cases, in which benevolence requires, that the law should be rigidly executed. Whenever the infliction of just punishment on individuals, tends to promote good order, and the happiness of society at large, to dispense with such punishment argues, not the exuberance of good will, but the want of it. In like manner, if it be just to punish the sinner without end, such punishment may contribute to the order and well being of God's moral kingdom. If it does, that benevolence, which regards the whole more than the parts, and that which is greater, more than what is less, requires, that such punishment be inflicted.

It becomes highly important, therefore, to ascertain whether endless punishment be consistent with justice; in other words, whether it be proportionate to the sinner's character. This, you perceive, is perfectly distinct from the main question; and may be answered in the affirmative, without proving the actual perpetuity of future punishment.

Towards rational creatures God sustains the character of a lawgiver. From the fact, that God maintains a moral government over intelligent beings, it follows, that there are some things, which he approves and will reward: others, which he disapproves and will punish. God is a legislator, and that he will reward the observance of his law, and punish violations of

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it, is more clearly taught in revealed, than in natural religion. The punishment threatened to disobedience, is in the dialect of Scripture, termed the curse of the law.

In Deuteronomy 27 : 26, it is said : Cursed is he who confirmeth not the words of this law to do them. To which passage the apostle evidently refers, in his epistle to the Galatians : As many, as are of the works of the law, are under the curse ; for it is written, Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. To ascertain the duration of the evils, comprehended under this curse, may be of use towards determining whether endless punishment be consistent with divine justice. For, that the law of God is just, will not be denied. Of course the penalties, which it threatens, cannot be unjust. These penalties must consist either in limited or unlimited evils ; i. e. sufferings, which are either temporary or endless. It is likewise certain, that the wicked will, after death, endure a punishment, to which the Scriptures apply the term everlasting : They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This language, however powerful, is supposed by those, who deny the perpetuity of future punishment, to mean nothing more, than a limited duration. If so, it may be equal to the evils, which are threatened in the law, or it may be greater or less. If the future punishment of the reprobates is just equal to that which is threatened in the law, it is in fact precisely the same. And if the impenitent will endure the curse of the law, it is evident that they will not be saved. They will be treated with as much severity, as if no Saviour had been appointed. For, in that case, more than was threatened in the law could not have been required.

Suppose then, that the punishment, threatened by law, is limited ; yet of greater duration, than that which reprobates will in fact experience. But that which reprobates will experience, is declared to be eternal ;—to continue forever and ever. Now, whatever these terms may signify, it is evident, that none, more powerful, are used to express the curse, denounced by the law ;

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and therefore no person can assert, that the law threatens a greater punishment, than that which reprobates will endure, unless he can show, that such punishment is more than eternal, and will continue longer than forever and ever. It will hardly be said, I suppose, that the punishment, threatened by the divine law, is less than that which the impenitent will endure. For, in that case, the Gospel is a dispensation of more severity than the law; and if, as will be readily granted, the law threatens all the punishment which is just, the Gospel threatens that which is unjust. It appears, then, that the curse of the divine law, is neither a temporary punishment greater nor less than the punishment which reprobates will endure; nor yet, admitting the latter to be limited, are the two commensurate; it follows then that the punishment, threatened by the law, is not temporary; by consequence, it is eternal. Now, if eternal punishment be threatened in the divine law, the justice of such punishment cannot be denied. Nothing can be more evidently dishonorable to God, than a supposition, that he should threaten a punishment, which it would be unjust to inflict. In all human governments, this is so far from contributing to the support of authority, that it excites either contempt or rebellion.

If in this argument, which has been suggested by a late American divine, there be any thing liable to objection, it must be in that proposition, which asserts, that the curse of the law cannot be the same which is actually inflicted on the impenitent, on supposition the latter is temporary. Some persons, it is probable, believe that the limited punishment, which reprobates will suffer hereafter is precisely what the law threatens; and that the culprit, after enduring such punishment, will experience no salvation, but sink into primitive non-existence.

It is readily acknowledged, that this opinion is not affected by the preceding reasoning, which holds good in regard to those only, who believe in universal salvation. Whatever others do, they cannot deny the justice of endless punishment; but must acknowledge, conformably to their own sentiments, that such punishment is consistent with justice.

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There is another ground, on which the justice of future unlimited punishment may be defended. It is this. As long as a person sins, he deserves punishment. If he sin during his whole life, he will be exposed to sufferings during life. If he sin for a thousand years after his death, he will suffer during that time. If he sin eternally, his punishment must have no end. This, I have no doubt, is as truly the dictate of natural religion, as of revelation. From the moral perfections of God, it follows that he is friendly to virtue and hostile to vice. To make known his true character, this friendship and this hostility must be expressed. It will be far from him to suffer "the wicked to be as the righteous." Of course, if the righteous be happy, the unrighteous must be miserable. And if the divine purity would require a difference at one time, it would require that such difference be continued, as long as their respective characters remain unchanged. If, therefore, sinners continue to exist forever, it seems fairly to result from the first principles of natural religion, that they will suffer without end.

Objections will probably be made to the supposition, that any, known by Deity to be incorrigible, should forever be sustained in being.—A reply to this objection is obvious. If to support in punishment a being, foreknown to be incorrigible, for the space of ten, or even twenty years, be consistent with divine wisdom and benevolence, it can never be shown, that these attributes would militate against his being sustained a longer time, or even forever. There may be as good reasons for his continuance the year to come, as the year past, and so on without end.

That the punishment of a future life will, in fact, have any respect to sins, then committed, and not exclusively to deeds, which are done in the body, I do not assert. The last argument is designed only to prove, that eternal punishment in itself, is not incredible.

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LECTURE XLVIII.

ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

I SHALL now proceed in noticing those arguments, which are often used in opposition to the doctrine of endless punishment.

It is believed, by some, inconsistent with the character of a benevolent or even just God, to create any being, whose existence on the whole is worse than none: by consequence, none can be eternal sufferers.

The proposition here assumed, inevitably leads, I apprehend, to confound all moral qualities, i. e. to annihilate all distinction between virtue and vice.

If the vicious man may not be rendered miserable on the whole, i. e. have more misery than happiness, it must be because he does not deserve misery; but if vice does not deserve punishment, virtue can surely deserve no reward.

Virtue is the fulfilment, and vice the breach of moral obligation. I can deserve no reward for doing what I am bound to do, if I deserve no punishment for doing that which I am bound not to do. Of course, obedience and disobedience are equally without desert, and all distinction between virtue and vice is destroyed. Nor will this conclusion be, in any degree, invalidated, should it be said, as I apprehend it may with truth, that virtue itself deserves nothing more than a freedom from suffering. Nay, the conclusion would be more striking on this ground, than on any other. For if the man of unfailing virtue can claim, as matter of right, nothing more than freedom from punishment, this is precisely what the proposition states to be the claim of the most vicious man on earth.

The matter may be viewed in another light. If the greatest

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offender on earth cannot consistently with justice, be miserable on the whole, i. e. have his existence rendered worse than none, and if any distinction at all could still be supposed to remain between the actions of moral agents, a sinner, somewhat less enormous, deserving proportionably better treatment that the other, could lay claim to some positive reward: a sinner, still more moderate, might claim a greater reward, and so on through the various shades of moral depravity. How clearly inconsistent this is with the express declarations of Scripture, will appear from the following passages: The wages of sin is death. Judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things, written in the law to do them.

It will be remembered, that on the subject in hand, Scripture evidence must be decisive. Without the Scriptures, it has been observed, no person can be confident of a future state; much less of the continuance either of rewards or punishment. Now, if the testimony of Scripture is decisive, and the "wages of sin is death," if "every one is liable to a curse who continueth not in all things, written in the law to do them;" and if "judgment has come upon all men to condemnation," how is it possible, that the greatest offender should deserve no punishment, and that a great majority of offenders should merit reward? Yet you clearly perceive, that to say of any being, that he deserves not more misery than happiness, is the same as to say, that on the whole, he deserves no punishment.

Among those, who deny the perpetuity of future punishment, or advocate the doctrine of final restoration, it is not uncommon to avow a belief in necessity, as the ground of their opinion. Every thing, say they, happens by irresistible necessity; and, therefore, those actions, denominated sins, are really worthy of no punishment: and, of course, all men will be happy.

There is, in this argument, a very surprising leap between the premises and the conclusion, even should we allow the former to be true. If the doctrine were true, and if necessity annihilates all vice, you clearly perceive, that it likewise annihilates all virtue. By consequence, there would be no moral desert in

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any action whatever. But how creatures, who are, by the argument, as truly machines as a watch or a steam engine, and equally destitute of virtue, should yet be entitled to eternal rewards, or to any rewards, is not easily discovered.

Perhaps the objector may allow, that the doctrine of universal salvation does not follow from that of necessity: but is still confident, that future punishment cannot, on this hypothesis, be reconciled with the justice of God.

I answer, that most who believe the doctrine of necessity, suppose that the actions of Deity are no more free, than those of his creatures. Now if necessity destroys all injustice in men, it must, for the same reason, destroy all injustice in God. If men are not morally wrong in doing those actions, which we call unjust, neither can he be morally wrong in doing the same. If necessity annihilates the morality of one being, it annihilates the morality of all, who act under its influence. It is preposterous, therefore, for persons, who use this argument, to attribute to the Supreme Being either justice, or injustice. It is preposterous, therefore, to infer from the former attribute, that he will not eternally punish the wicked:—if he should, it would be equally preposterous to speak of him, as an unreasonable or hard master. If any thing more could be necessary to elucidate this subject, I would say, that if necessity excuses a thief for stealing, it excuses the judge who hangs him for it.

But perhaps the objector's opinion is, that God is free, though his creatures are not; and he believes it unjust in him freely to punish actions, which are necessarily performed.

No person, who urges this objection, can do it consistently; no person can be satisfied on such ground, unless he deliberately and habitually denies the distinction between virtue and vice; and ceases, of course, either to praise or blame any of his fellow creatures. Now the fact is, that we never find any such persons; we never find any, who doubt that some actions deserve praise, and others blame. Therefore we never find any person, who can, without undeniable inconsistency, urge the objection.

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It is to be further observed, that this argument proceeds on ground, which cannot be maintained without contending with the uniform declarations of Scripture; which testify, that there is a wide difference in moral actions. They denounce "wo to the wicked" because "the reward of his hand shall be given him." They say to the righteous, that "it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." They moreover speak with great frequency and clearness, as to the forgiveness of sins. But how can sins be forgiven, if we act under such a necessity, as precludes the possibility of sinning?

Those who confound virtue and vice, the Scriptures notice with pointed severity: Wo unto them, who put evil for good, and good for evil:—who put darkness for light, and light for darkness.

But all who use the argument which we are now considering, do, in the most palpable sense "put darkness for light and light for darkness." It is evident then, not only that the uniform language of Scripture condemns the proposition, on which this argument rests; but denounces a wo against those, who attempt to maintain it.

We are now to notice another argument against the doctrine of endless punishment. It is this: "All punishment is diciplinary. No being can justly receive punishment unless it be inflicted with design eventually to promote his own advantage. Therefore it is with this design that God will award punishment in a future life. But if punishments be awarded for this end, Deity must foresee, that the end will, at some time, be accomplished: by consequence, all will experience not only a termination of their sufferings, but final happiness."

That the reformation of the sufferer is frequently an end, for which punishment is inflicted, is not denied. But if punishment ever is, or can be inflicted for a different end, the argument fails. In attempting to ascertain its value, I observe

I. That in the mildest and most rational human governments, the object of many, perhaps of most laws, is not the benefit of individuals, considered as such, but the safety and happiness of

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the State. In regard to many laws, the object of punishment is doubtless twofold; viz. the sufferer's reformation and the common safety. In regard to many others, the object is exclusively the latter. Of this kind are all capital punishments. The laws never take life for the good of the sufferer; but evidently to deter others, and to prevent the culprit from doing further injury. Nothing can be more evident, than the confusion and danger, which society would experience, were punishment never administered, but with a view to the individual's amendment and benefit. According to this mode of proceeding, the most enormous transgressors, and those, by whom the peace of the community is most disturbed, would not only live, but enjoy impunity; for there is no probability, that the penalties of the law would on such persons, produce reformation. Small thefts, or other instances of dishonesty might be punished, as the delinquent would not be thought past reformation. But persons guilty of arson or murder, especially if they had committed these crimes frequently, would never fall under public censure. Nay further, it would not be just to punish such persons; it being assumed in the argument, that no punishment is just, but that which is disciplinary; and inveterate offenders may fairly be presumed to be incorrigible. The reasoning then, you see, comes to this: Justice requires that small crimes be punished; but secures impunity to them, by whom the greatest are perpetrated. In other words, because a person has become enormously wicked he deserves no punishment.

II. If punishment must be disciplinary in order to its being just, no descendant of Adam can be under obligation to his Creator's mercy, that he suffers no more.

Some persons are brought to repentance in this world; and some according to the theory, which we are considering, are made penitent by sufferings, endured beyond the grave. These sufferings are supposed to be just, because they are foreseen to issue in the sufferer's amendment. Of course, at the moment, when he does amend, justice has no further demand; any additional punishment would be tyrannical. No person,

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therefore, who is rendered penitent in this life, can acknowledge himself indebted to Christ for deliverance "from the wrath which is to come."

III. If no punishment is just, but that which is disciplinary, none but such a punishment is threatened in the divine law; for doubtless God has not threatened to do an unjust thing. All, therefore, who by discipline, whether in this world, or another, are brought to repentance, have suffered the "curse of the law," i. e. that punishment, which the law threatens. In Gal. 3: 13, it is said, that "Christ hath delivered us from the curse of the law." But if the opinion, which we are considering, is true, all persons actually suffer this curse; because they endure that discipline, whether mild or severe, whether present or future, which is necessary to bring them to repentance. It would follow then, that the reverse of St. Paul's assertion is true, and that Christ does not deliver men from the curse of the law; and it will likewise follow, that if he did this, it would be an important injury; it would be delivering us from that, which is necessary to our amendment and salvation.

IV. If this opinion be considered in another view, its consequences will be equally absurd: they will be, that salvation, instead of being enjoyed by all, will be enjoyed by none. Salvation is security from evil. This is agreeable to St. Paul's declaration: Jesus delivereth us from the wrath which is to come. Now, what is that evil; what is that wrath from which men are delivered? It is either deserved or undeserved. It will hardly be said, I think, that Christ came to deliver us from a punishment, which was undeserved; for of such punishment, unless the divine government is unjust, we were in no danger. It follows then, that Christ came to deliver us from a just punishment; but, by the supposition, no punishment is just, but that, which is disciplinary; i. e. necessary to bring the sufferer to repentance. But this is the precise punishment, which, it is supposed, all men endure. Therefore all men endure the curse of the law, or the wrath which is to come. The consequence of the opinion, viewed in this light, is, that none will be saved.

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V. If the opinion, which we are considering, were true, it would be difficult to see what has been effected by the interposition of Christ. For, on this supposition, even now, the law has its full course. Every offender endures all that punishment which it threatens, or can threaten with justice; i. e. he endures that discipline, which is requisite for his amendment. If it be said that the sufferings of Christ were necessary to procure for men, positive happiness after their amendment, I answer, that as, by the supposition, every human being, either in this world or in the next, satisfies the law, i. e. endures the penalty, which the law threatens, he is, for ought which appears, as fair a candidate for happiness by the law, as Adam was at the first moment of his probation. In regard to the law, he is perfectly right. If you tell him, that he once broke the law, he allows it; but immediately rejoins, that he has paid the penality. If a person has, this day, discharged a debt of ten years' standing, he is as completely free from his creditor, as he was before the debt was contracted. If a person has been punished for some crime, by imprisonment, when the term of his confinement is expired, he is as completely under the protection of the law as any individual in the community. So, if men satisfy the law by that suffering which corrects their vices and reduces them to obedience, one can by no means see, how the atonement of Christ should be necessary to render them happy.

VI. If no punishment is just, but that which is disciplinary, it is evident, that offences can never be punished on account of the injury which they occasion either to other individuals, or to the community. In civil governments, a man is not to be branded or imprisoned for dishonesty, because this crime renders property insecure, and exposes the owners to want: the incendiary is not to be punished to prevent houses from being set on fire, and their inhabitants from being consumed in the flames; the murderer is not to suffer the penalty of the law, because he has shed human blood,—brought distress on a family, and terror to the public; but solely for his own advantage. The magistrate, unmindful of the public good, is to keep but one thing in view; and that is the good of the criminal.

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Further, if this opinion were true, the Deity himself must proceed on the same principles. He must never punish envy, hatred, malice, and impiety, because these crimes are hateful in themselves, and dishonorable to his government, and injurious to his creatures. He must place, and preserve the sinner precisely in that situation where his individual happiness would be most advanced, whatever injury may be sustained by other beings, or even by the universe itself. How perfectly inconsistent these things would be with the common feelings and judgment of mankind, needs not to be shown.

Nor is the opinion under consideration, more opposed to human judgment, than it is to Scripture. Let any one read the divine declarations concerning the future punishment of ungodly men, and say, whether they describe merely parental discipline, designed only for the recovery and final felicity of the sufferer: Fear not them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: but fear him, who, when he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? The wicked, it is said: shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies; and will reward them that hate me. Christ, it is said, "shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them, who know not God." The apostle speaks of "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the former is represented as requesting that the latter might be sent to afford some alleviation to his extreme sufferings. Here was the fairest opportunity to suggest the sentiment, which we endeavor to oppose. Why did not Abraham say, what was well known to him, if this sentiment be just; Your punishment is designed for your amendment; and, as soon as you repent, it will expire. After which, you will participate the same felicity

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and glory which are now enjoyed by the saints. Instead of this, Abraham replied: Between us and you, there is a great gulf fixed; so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, who would come from thence.

But it has lately been suggested, that there is something in Scripture phraseology, which favors the idea of disciplinary punishment. "The word κολάζειν, rendered *to punish*, in Matt. xxv, and other places, properly signifies, we are told, correction inflicted for the benefit of the offender." That this criticism has no foundation; and that this word has the same general signification, as our English word, *punish*, will appear by the following evidence. In the first Olynthiac of Demosthenes, speaking of those who should be found iniquitous in the war against Philip, he advises, that they should be punished, τοὺς δ' ἀδικοῦντας κολάζειν. Considering the manner, in which the Athenians were in the habit of punishing such delinquents, frequently with death, it is impossible to suppose, that the orator is speaking of correction, inflicted for the offender's benefit. Surely persons were not put to death for their own advantage. Lysias, in his oration against Eratosthenes, advises in regard to the thirty tyrants, that they should be punished by death. No one can doubt the meaning of this passage, or imagine that Lysias was recommending means, by which the oppressors of Athens might improve their morals. The use of the terms, in the New Testament, which are translated *punishment* and *to punish* is by no means such as to support the criticism, against which we object.

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LECTURE XLIX.

ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Previously to bringing forward the positive proof, which supports the doctrine of endless punishment, it may be necessary to notice the two following objections, in addition to those, which were considered in the last lecture.

I. It is believed by some, that those passages of Scripture, which speak of the wicked, as being consumed, destroyed, etc. do not relate to persons, but to the crimes of men. By such passages they understand, that the vices and bad dispositions of men will be destroyed, while men themselves, thus happily delivered from guilt, will be raised to partake of honor, and life eternal. If this sentiment be true, you perceive, that the persons of the wicked will not only not receive eternal punishment, but will receive no punishment at all.

To show the absurdity of this opinion, many words cannot be required. The language, in which the laws of God are expressed, is, in general, similar to that which is used by human legislators. In civil laws, the crime is stated, and the punishment attached to it. Persons who steal, rob, or break open houses, shall be imprisoned, placed in the pillory, set on the gallows, or punished with death. So the laws of God, as stated in the divine oracles, are: The soul that sinneth, it shall die. He that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish. The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment.

Now, should we allow for a moment, that there is no absurdity in the idea of punishing sins, in the abstract, it would still be evident, that the language of Scripture no more favors

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such an opinion, than the language of human laws. And a person, taking up a book of statutes, might as well understand, that neither dishonest persons, nor thieves, nor murderers were threatened; but only knavery, theft, and murder in the abstract, as he could understand the Scriptures to threaten sin, and not the sinner.

We ought not, at any time, but especially when attempting to explain the Scriptures, to use language without ideas. Now let it be inquired, what is meant by those, who say, that the sins of wicked men, and not wicked men themselves, will be punished, thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, the place, prepared for the devil and his angels? It is no more conceivable, that sins, abstracted from their authors, should be punished in another state, than in the present. Suppose then, that one person threatens the life of another; the guilty person goes free; but the threatening itself is taken to prison, or perhaps is required to give bonds for good behavior. Another person is guilty of forgery; he himself is to be acquitted; but the crime is to be branded or condemned to hard labor. A third person is guilty of perjury; the person himself goes free, as in the former cases; but the perjury is punished with imprisonment, perpetual infamy or death. That reflecting persons should be satisfied, when the most alarming denunciations of Scripture are explained in a manner, so palpably absurd, is not within the limits of possibility.

II. Some persons, unwilling to encounter the difficulties, attending the doctrine of universal salvation, and still rejecting that of endless punishment, have embraced, as a medium, the belief of annihilation. Of them, who cherish this opinion, some believe, that the wicked will be annihilated at death; while others suppose, that they will previously endure a punishment, proportionate to their crimes.

Each of these opinions will be briefly examined: and

I. That which considers the existence of wicked men as ending at death. Against this opinion are the following objections.

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In many passages of Scripture, the wicked are represented as retaining their existence after the dissolution of the body. the rich sensualist is declared by Christ to be in torments. But annihilation, which destroys existence, most evidently precludes the possibility of suffering. Under this particular might be mentioned the words of Christ, which declare, that in the place of punishment, there is "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth." That actions should be attributed to creatures, not in existence, is a glaring solecism.

Again, the wicked, we are assured, will appear at the day of judgment: When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another. Some will be condemned, and sent to immediate punishment. Now, this would be wholly impossible, if the wicked were annihilated at death. The dead could not stand before God, and be judged out of the things written in the books, if they had been previously struck out of existence.

Further, we are informed not only that all men will stand before God; but that "all will receive according as their works have been." For some sinners it will be more tolerable, than for others, as there will be a difference in the number of stripes inflicted. But annihilation at death precludes every difference of this kind.

Let us now examine the opinion, that the impenitent will be annihilated, after having endured a punishment, proportionate to their offences.

The principal arguments, by which the doctrine of annihilation is defended, are taken from those passages, which threaten the wicked with death, destruction, etc. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if, through the spirit, ye do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." The impenitent "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, etc."

Now, whatever plausibility the argument may have, if used

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to prove annihilation at death, it can have none in proof of the opinion, now under consideration. For, if the wicked, previously to annihilation, receive a punishment, proportionate to their demerit, annihilation is no part of their punishment. Their punishment consists in evils, previously endured. But when they are threatened with death, destruction, etc. they are doubtless threatened with that punishment, which will in fact be incurred. Therefore, when they are threatened with death, they are threatened with a punishment to be endured previously to annihilation. Of course, death, destruction, etc. express misery, and not annihilation.

All those passages of Scripture, you perceive, which attribute perpetuity to future punishment, are inconsistent with the opinion now under consideration. The advocates of this sentiment, no less than the abettors of universal salvation, are therefore bound to show, that those passages do not express endless punishment.

Nor is it less obvious, that none, who consider future punishment, as disciplinary; or imagine that divine goodness will prevent any of the human race from being miserable on the whole, i. e. from having an existence, which is worse than none;—it is obvious, I observe, that none of these persons can, without inconsistency, admit the doctrine, which we are endeavoring to disprove. For, if it be true, that the wicked, after having suffered a punishment, adequate to their demerit, will be annihilated, most evidently their punishment is not by way of discipline;—it is not designed for their good. Nor can it be denied, that such persons are miserable on the whole, as annihilation precludes the possibility of their being remunerated for sufferings, previously endured.

As to the terms destruction, death, etc. when applied to the wicked, there is no more necessity for understanding them to signify annihilation, than there is necessity for believing, that sensual persons are annihilated during life, it being said by the apostle, that "she who liveth in pleasure, is dead while she liveth."

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We come now to consider those passages, which directly assert the endless duration of future punishment: "He, that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness; but is in danger of eternal damnation. These are clouds, carried with a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. A similar declaration is found in Jude: The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever. The devil that deceived them, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

We have brought these texts together, rather than any others, for reasons, which will soon be apparent.

To elude the force of these strong passages, it will be replied, that the terms everlasting, forever, etc. do not necessarily mean an endless duration. It is conceded, that the Greek word αἰὼν does, not unfrequently, in the New Testament, express an age which has limits. As it is applied both to duration which is limited, and to that which is unlimited, though somewhat more frequently to the latter, I do not imagine, that merely from the use of that word, the question before us could be decided. But, in a particular construction, the word is used with more uniformity; I mean, when it is preceded by the preposition εἰς; which is the construction in all those passages, which have now been cited. This same word in the accusative, preceded by εἰς, is found in fifty-six places of Griesbach's copy of the New Testament. In our common copies, it is found in four other instances. In the six places quoted, future punishment is unquestionably the subject. In all places, excepting these, the phrase expresses endless duration. There is good reason, therefore, to believe, that in these instances, it has the same meaning.

In proof of the perpetuity of future punishment we now cite the following passages: Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. Then

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shall the king say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment. But he, that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven; but is in danger of eternal damnation. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

In all these places, the word translated *everlasting* is in the original, the adjective, derived from the noun whose signification we have just been noticing.

This word is used about seventy times in the New Testament. In more than forty instances, it is connected with ζωὴ *life*, and expresses that future life, which is the gift of God to his saints. That this is endless, will not be called in question. That which is so generally denominated *eternal life*, is, in other places, called "everlasting habitations," and "a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." It is likewise called, "an eternal weight of glory," and "everlasting consolation." When applied to these subjects, its signification must be the same, as when applied to life, as the same idea is conveyed by these various expressions. Αἰώνιος is likewise applied to the might and the glory of God: in which application, its meaning is by no means equivocal. Out of the whole number of instances, in which the word is used, more than six cannot be found, of its importing less than an endless duration. Nor is it certain, in regard to any one of these, that its import is limited: though the contrary cannot be made evident.

There is, for ought which appears in the New Testament, as much uniformity in the original word, as in that by which it is rendered in English. We sometimes use the word eternal, without designing to express endless duration. But in such cases, the term does not change its meaning; but we use it in a figurative manner. Between two nations, we say, that there existed an "eternal enmity." In this hyperbolical expression, we do not mean that *eternal* signifies less than endless, but we mean to express a great duration, though limited, by applying a term, signifying duration without limits.

Should any one choose to consider the matter in a light some-

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what different, and suppose, that whereas the word *eternal* originally signified a limited duration by a figure only; such has now become its literal meaning, it would make no material difference. Let it be supposed, that an English divine in five or six places applies the word *eternal* or *everlasting* to the future punishment of the wicked;—that he evidently uses the term, in about fifty places, to express an unlimited duration; and in five or six instances applied the same word to human contention, or some object of a temporary nature; no one, it is believed, would stop to inquire, whether this use were literal or figurative, in order to ascertain what were the author's sentiments on the subject of future punishment. It would be universally understood that the author believed in its endless continuance. But, in this statement, somewhat more is conceded than is necessary. We have considered it as a given point, that the writer here mentioned, uses the word eternal in five or six instances to express merely a limited duration. That the Greek word, answering to this, is once used by the writer of the New Testament in this limited sense, is far from being certain, though it is not improbable.

In addition to this let it be considered, that in the very same sentence, in which the future life of the righteous is said to be eternal, the punishment of the wicked is asserted to be eternal: *These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.* That in the latter part of the sentence, the word αἰώνιος signifies duration without end, cannot be questioned; that it should mean less in the former, especially considering the common import of the term, is by no means credible.

It will readily occur to you, that unless the Scriptures prove the eternity of future punishment, they do not prove the eternity of future rewards, nor even the eternal existence of the soul. And, if the pains of reprobates will have an end, so, for aught which appears, may the happiness of the righteous.

But the arguments drawn from the words εἰς αἰῶνας and αἰώνιος however cogent, are far from being the only ones, which

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support the doctrine in question; which doctrine might have been proved from Scripture, even if these terms had never been used. Consider the following passage, recorded in the 9th chapter of Mark: If thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. It is difficult to conceive, whence language more powerful and more determinate, could be obtained. That the fire in which the wicked shall suffer, is not quenched, our Saviour has asserted no less than five times, within the compass of a few verses. It has, I well know, been replied, that allowing the fire to be unquenchable, and the worm immortal, it does not hence follow, that the wicked will be eternally tormented by the one or the other. This answer is too trifling to give satisfaction. For what imaginable reason should our Saviour speak so explicitly and so repeatedly of the perpetuity of the fire, unless it were to be the perpetual instrument of punishment to the sinner? Its duration is mentioned by our Saviour, as a weighty motive to deter from crimes. But of what importance is it to the wicked, whether the fire, from which they are delivered, be extinguished or maintained?

Concerning those, in the invisible world, it is said: Let him who is unjust, be unjust still, and let him who is filthy, be filthy still. What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? To the wicked God says: I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind. It is said of the wicked, that they "shall be destroyed without remedy;" and repeatedly, that their "hopes shall perish."

Further, our Saviour said concerning Judas: It had been good for that man if he had not been born. As an argument against the final salvation of all men, this passage is conclusive. For, if salvation is universal, Judas is not excluded. But if Judas partakes of salvation, his existence is inexpressibly valuable. Suppose him to endure as great sufferings as you please, yet

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being limited, they bear no proportion to the glory which is to follow. His existence on the whole, would therefore be to him immeasurably advantageous.

It would be easy to accumulate passages of Scripture, similar in their import, to those which have been adduced. It is believed, however, that the evidence already exhibited is sufficient to prove, that the punishment of the wicked has no end. But to prove a doctrine, is one thing; to make men feel and live as if it were true, is another. The latter, in regard to the doctrine now discussed, is far the more difficult. By persons, who entertain a holy confidence in the government of God, the subject may, perhaps, be contemplated without agitation, though not without the most profound and awful solemnity. But, that persons who make no pretensions to piety, who have scarcely considered what is implied in the term, and would even be ashamed to be numbered among its votaries—that such persons should without anxiety, and the highest degree of terror, reflect on the doctrine of eternal punishment, as either true or probable, is a fact, of which no account can be given, without resorting to that deep depravity in the human heart, which perverts all the powers of man from their proper use, and renders him insensible to his acknowledged interest. That you may consider what is comprehended in the doctrine, now proved, I borrow the representation of an eloquent French writer. "When I endeavor to represent eternity, said he, I avail myself of whatever I can conceive most firm and durable. I heap imagination on imagination, conjecture on conjecture. I go from our age to the time of publishing the Gospel, thence to the publication of the law, and from the law to the flood, and from the flood to the creation. I join this epoch to the present time, and I imagine Adam yet living. Had Adam lived till now, and had he lived in misery, had he passed all his time in a fire, or on a rack, what idea must we form of his condition? At what price would we agree to expose ourselves to miseries so great? What imperial glory would appear glorious, were it followed by

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so much woe? Yet this is not eternity; all this is nothing in comparison of eternity!

"I go further still. I proceed from imagination to imagination, from one supposition to another. I take the greatest number of years that can be imagined. I add ages to ages, millions of ages to millions of ages. I form of all these one fixed number, and I stay my imagination. After this I suppose God to create a world like this which we inhabit. I suppose him creating it by forming one atom after another, and employing in the production of each atom, the time fixed in my calculation, just now mentioned. What numberless ages would the production of such a world, in such a manner require! Then I suppose the Creator to arrange these atoms, and to pursue the same plan of arranging them as of creating them. What numberless ages would such an arrangement require. Finally, I suppose him to dissolve and annihilate the whole, observing the same method in the dissolution, as he observed in the creation and disposition of the whole. What an immense duration would be consumed! Yet this is not eternity. All this is only a point in comparison of eternity.

"My God," exclaimed the agitated preacher, "one night, passed in a burning fever, or in struggling among the waves of the sea, between life and death, appears of an immense length! It seems to the sufferer, as if the sun had forgot his course, and as if all the laws of nature itself were subverted. What then will be the state of those miserable victims to divine displeasure, who, after they shall have passed through the ages, which we have been describing, will be obliged to make this overwhelming reflection: All this is but an atom of our misery! What will their despair be, when they shall be forced to say to themselves: Again we must revolve through these enormous periods; again we must suffer the privation of celestial happiness: devouring flames again; cruel remorse again; crimes and blasphemies over and over again; *Forever, forever!* Ah, how severe is this word, even in this life! How great is a misfortune, when it is incapable of relief! How insupportable when we

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are obliged to add *forever* to it! These irons forever! These chains forever! This prison forever! This universal contempt forever! Poor mortals, how short sighted are you, to call sorrows eternal which end with your lives! What, this life; this life, which passeth with the rapidity of a weaver's shuttle! This life, which vanisheth like a sleep; is this what you call forever? Ah, absorbing periods of eternity, accumulated myriads of ages; these, if I may be allowed to speak so, these will be the forever of the damned!"

In view of this painting, so vivid and so terrific, you perhaps exclaim, the doctrine must be false. Then I will make but one request: it is, that you would abandon every immorality, all profane language, all contempt of the Lord's day, all dissipation; and exhibit the feelings of rational beings and Christians, till you can prove the doctrine false or even incredible. Do this, and I am silent forever.

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LECTURE L.

ON DEMONIACS.

Among the miracles wrought by our Saviour, and recorded by the evangelists, the recovery of persons, apparently under the influence of evil spirits, holds a conspicuous place.

The common opinion, among Christians, has been, that the accounts of these miraculous cures, are to be literally understood; and of course, that evil spirits had such possession of the afflicted persons, as to produce disorder in body or mind, or perhaps in both.

Another opinion has been embraced by no inconsiderable number; viz. that the persons said to be possessed, were under the influence of natural disorders;—but disorders of such a kind as had been by heathens and Jews, especially the former, attributed to the influence of evil spirits, and that the common language was retained by Christ and the evangelists, though neither of them designed to countenance belief in real possession.

Our present design is to make an inquiry into this subject.

Lest there should be any misconception, I would observe, that both sides are agreed, that whatever may have been the origin of these disorders, the cure was miraculous. So that whatever may be our ideas as to the inferences which might be made from either of these opinions, we are not to charge those, who hold either the one or the other, as doubting the divine authority of Christ or the integrity of the evangelists. Although a very great majority of Christians have believed in the doctrine of real possessions, the other has been defended by men of no

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less reputation, than Drs. Joseph and Richard Mead, Dr. Sykes, Dr. Lardner, and Mr. Hugh Farmer.

I begin by observing, that the existence of evil spirits, whether denominated satan, devils, or demons, is by no means inconsistent with reason.

So far as we are able to examine the works of God, there is a striking and regular gradation. The lowest effort of creative power appears to be dull, unorganized matter. Stones and metals seem entitled to a superior rank. These, however, as proof of divine wisdom, are not to be placed on a level with vegetables. In vegetables there is great diversity. But the lowest may be considered as higher than any individuals in the mineral kingdom. The sensitive plant seems to approximate to animal life. Among brute animals, the series may be traced from the most sluggish, to those which display the greatest sagacity and sprightliness. From the latter, to the least intelligent of our own race, the chasm seems not to be very wide. From these the gradation is continued, till we arrive at those rare geniuses, which, to the rest of men, are objects of admiration.

Now, as the series may be traced thus far, is its greater extent improbable? Will any person pretend to be confident that man is the highest effect of creative wisdom? that there is not, in the universe, any race of dependent beings superior to our own? On this subject, without revelation, no certainty could be ascertained; but surely it is not difficult to ascertain on which side there is most probability. Revelation enables us to decide in favor of that which was before probable.

But if there are creatures of rank, superior to man, analogy will justify the supposition, that they either are, or have been in a state of probation. The very idea of probation supposes, that they who are tried, may conduct amiss. Human beings have thus conducted, and are depraved. No person, I think, will assert, that there is the least shadow of incredibility in the supposition, that some among superior intelligences have done the same. If they have, their character corresponds, in gen-

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eral, with that which is assigned in Scripture to a being of great intellectual powers, called the devil, satan, the accuser, etc.

These beings, from their character, would not be peaceable subjects of the divine government. Moral evil is of the same nature, whatever be the intellectual rank of those to whom it belongs. If there be bad angels, therefore, they resemble bad men, with this difference, that their powers are much greater; and, having existed a much longer time, their habits of sinning are proportionably more inveterate. If, in addition to this, it be supposed, that their doom is determined, and they are placed beyond the hope of recovery, further reasons will be apparent, why their malignity should be decisive, open, and without restraint. Such beings would be strongly inclined to injure the other subjects of Jehovah's empire. If you ask, why they should, I reply; For the same reasons, which induce men, whose depravity is unspeakably less, to be injurious to each other. Individuals of our own species are hostile among themselves. Nations employ their whole ingenuity in devising methods of distressing those, with whom they are at war. This proceeds less commonly from malice, than from pride or unrestrained self love; though not unfrequently from all these. The very existence of evil spirits, makes it credible, that so far as permission is given, they are injurious to other beings.

Is it then, either incredible, or highly improbable, that such permission should be given; which is to say, that other beings should sometimes be in a situation, exposed to their malevolence?

Your first impression perhaps is, that if creatures of such pernicious character exist, the goodness of God requires, that they be so restrained, as that others shall receive from them no injury. However plausible this conjecture may appear, it is not supported by analogy. Vicious men are permitted to act with freedom; and many others are placed within their power. They do, in fact, produce extensive injury. No inconsiderable part of human sufferings, results from the abuse of that power with which wicked men are entrusted. One tyrant may dis-

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turb, and does disturb the peace of millions. Now, it is, I presume, perfectly clear to your apprehensions, that the same difficulty exists in both cases. We should beforehand presume, as confidently, that wicked men would be restrained from doing injury, as that such restraints should be imposed on other vicious beings of superior rank. But, as facts show, that our conjecture would, in one case, be erroneous, it is probably not less so in the other.

Let it now be considered, that the Scriptures speak with great frequency, not only of the existence of an evil spirit as principal, and others, acting under his influence, but likewise of the interest which they take in human concerns.

In the Mosaic account of the fall of man those powers are attributed to the serpent, which it is well known, do not belong to brute animals; such as speech, intelligence and the power of reasoning. Nor do I know how this account can be rationally explained without supposing the serpent actuated by an invisible intelligent being, of insidious and malignant character. In 1 Chron. 21: 1 it is said, that Satan provoked David to number the people. In the book of Job, his existence and agency are strongly asserted, as likewise in the prophecy of Zechariah.

In the New Testament, this evil spirit is denominated the god of this world; than which expression, nothing can more evidently imply the interest which he takes, and the power which he exerts, in human affairs. To destroy the works of the devil is declared to be the great object of our Saviour's advent. But our Saviour's office related entirely to men. It was for the inhabitants of this world, that his instructions and sufferings were immediately designed. By consequence, this earth is the theatre of those works of the devil, which Christ came to destroy. It is further noticeable, that the progress of Christianity is represented in the following language: *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven.* These passages clearly prove, that the world which we inhabit, is not secure from satanical influence. But the Scriptures inform us more fully and more minutely. They represent, that this influence is not con-

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fined either to the bodies or the souls of men, but is occasionally exerted on both. His great object is to corrupt the mind, and not unfrequently to injure the body. It was he, we have seen, who allured our first parents to taste the prohibited fruit. It was he, who provoked David to number the people. Christians are required to stand against the *wiles of the devil.* The apostle speaks of him as "an adversary going about, seeking whom he may devour." Bad men are mentioned, as "led captive by him at his will;" and yet, as within the possibility of being recovered from his snares. And our Saviour has taught us, that the devil comes and takes away the word from the hearts of indocile hearers, lest they should believe and be saved. Now, I well know, that the authority here adduced, is sufficient to substantiate any narrative; and that no person, who, does not reject revealed religion, can question facts which rest on such foundation. Yet it may not be altogether useless to observe, that the doctrine of these passages is supported by analogy. Vicious men are not contented to keep their vices to themselves; and the more excessive their vices are, the greater effort do they make to propagate them. As soon, therefore, as it is shown that there are devils or vicious beings, superior to man, it becomes, in a high degree probable, even without any express testimony, that such beings will use their power in disseminating their own vices,—in promoting rebellion against the divine government.

Nor have the Scriptures been less particular in showing that satanical influence has, at some times, been exerted to injure the bodies of men. To such influence they attribute the tormenting disorder under which Job suffered. Of one of the patients, restored by our Saviour, he speaks thus: This woman, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years. When St. Peter first instructed Cornelius in Christianity, he represented its author, as "anointed by the Holy Ghost, and with power; and going about doing good, and healing all, who were oppressed of the devil."

Let us now suppose an objector introduced, who observes,

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"All which you have already endeavored to prove, I am not much concerned to refute. In those passages, which have been quoted, Satan or devil, is the term used. That there is such a being as this, may perhaps, without great reluctance, be conceded. But as yet, the subject originally mentioned, has not been entered upon. That subject was, Demoniacs or persons said to be possessed. But from these persons, it is never said by Christ, or the evangelists, that Satan was ejected, or that devils were ejected; the term, used on these occasions, is always either *δαίμονες* or *δαιμόνια*. Now, the number of persons said in the Gospel to be possessed is very considerable; and this distinction being uniformly preserved, there is reason to think, that when Christ or the evangelists used the term *demon*, they never meant the same as when they spake of the devil or Satan."

In reply I acknowledge the facts in general stated in the objection. Possessions are attributed usually if not invariably to demons and not to devils.

The term *δαίμων*, occurs three times in the Gospels, and twice in the Apocalypse. The word *δαιμόνιον* is found in the New Testament about sixty times. The word *δαιμονιζόμενοι*, meaning possessed by demons, is used in thirteen places. Moreover the word *διάβολος* is never used in the plural number when applied to any but human beings. That this word and *σατανᾶς* mean the same thing, there can be no doubt. And considering, that neither of these words when not applied to men, is used in the plural number, and possessions, with but one, if any exception, are attributed to demons, which word is frequently used in the plural number, the probability is so strong as to be little short of certainty, that the individual being called Satan or the devil, was not the immediate agent in those, who are said to have been demonized or possessed. I say, not the immediate agent; for he may have been, and probably was, the principal or commander over those less elevated, but numerous spirits, called demons. Both they and he, it is evident, are of

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the same moral character. They are alike in opposition both to God and men.

That Satan is the enemy of God, needs not to be proved. That the demons are such, is evident from this consideration, that they are condemned to be tormented. Those who possessed the man at Gadara, exclaimed to our Saviour: Art thou come to torment us before the time? None but the enemies of God are reserved for punishment.

The demons manifested their hostility to men, by the bodily sufferings which they occasioned. The hostility of Satan, or the devil, was exhibited in the same manner, as appears from two passages already cited; in one of which our Saviour speaks of a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound eighteen years; in another, it is said, that Jesus went about "healing all those, who are oppressed of the devil."

Now as Satan and the demons are spirits of the same moral character, and both have displayed their malignity by doing injury to the bodies of men, it does not seem at all material to determine how great may be their resemblance, in other respects, or why both do not pass under the same name.

There is, however, a remarkable passage in the 25th of Matthew, which ought to be noticed in connexion with this subject. There we read of a "place, prepared for the devil and his angels." There is, in my mind, a very strong presumption, that by the angels of Satan, here spoken of, are meant the demons.

Mr. Farmer, whose name has already been mentioned, and who has written, with great ingenuity and learning against possessions, as commonly understood, argues in the following manner. The terms, answering to *demon* among the Greeks, designate heathen deities, many and perhaps most of whom were the souls of dead men. He shows that the Jews and early Christians sometimes used the term in the same sense. "Now," says he, "the sacred writers having given us no notice of their using the word in a new or peculiar sense, did certainly employ it in reference to possessions, in the same sense in which other

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persons did." His inference is, that as Christ and the evangelists believed in one God only, and did not believe that human souls went from one body to another, they could not design to assert that the persons possessed were under any supernatural influence whatever; but must have meant this only, that the persons in question had those disorders, whether of body or mind, which were usually attributed to demons.

In reply to this, I observe 1st, that if the premises be just, there is between them and the conclusion, a very enormous chasm.

The Greeks and the Jews, and even early Christians used the term *demons* to signify pagan gods, or the souls of dead men. Christ and the evangelists did not use the term in any new sense. What is the inference? Irresistibly this, that Christ and the evangelists used the terms to signify pagan gods or human souls. But this conclusion is, says Mr. Farmer, inconsistent with fact. Unquestionably it is. What then are we to do? Nothing can be more certain, than that where an inference, legitimately made, is false, the reasoning is good, but the premises are bad. If it were true then, that the Jews, Greeks, and Christians did invariably use the words answering to *demon*, to signify human souls or pagan gods, it would follow that Christ and those who wrote the Gospels, did not use it in the same sense in which others used it. But it is not true, even by the concessions of this learned author, that the word demon among the Greeks always signified beings of human origin. He allows that some philosophers taught that pagan demons were evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind, and that many of the Christian fathers were of the same opinion. Therefore, Christ and the evangelists might have used these words, as they had been previously used by some of the Greeks, and as they were frequently afterwards used by some of the Christian fathers, and yet have meant by them neither less nor nore than evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind; which perfectly corresponds with the ideas usually entertained of possessions.

Another argument, distinct from this, ought not to be omit-

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ted. It is certain, that the word θεὸς, among the Greeks, was frequently applied to dead men, and seldom or never applied to such a being as Jehovah, or the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Yet, that the writers of Scripture apply the term to this glorious Being, will not be denied. It is evident then, that some words are used by the sacred writers, to express characters, very different from those, to which the same terms were applied among the Greeks. So that were it fact, which even by concession it is not, that the Greeks before the coming of Christ, or the Christian fathers afterwards, invariably used the term demon to signify characters, different from those to which possessions are commonly attributed, it would not follow, that Christ and the evangelists used this term in the same manner.

It may be objected, that though this word was by the Greeks applied to beings very different from Jehovah, yet at the time of our Saviour, the Jews had long been habituated to the Septuagint version, in which the term is applied to Jehovah; and therefore, in such use there could have been no ambiguity.

In answer to this, I observe, that there was a time, when the Septuagint version was made. At that time, the word above mentioned was applied to a being, extremely different from those who had been previously designated by that term. Therefore, were it necessary to suppose that the term demon carries a different meaning in sacred, from what it does in profane writings, such a change of meaning would have been analogous to another well-known fact; and therefore not incredible.

Dr. Lardner's testimony on this subject, is of great value, not only on account of his learning, integrity, and candor, but because he is known not to have held those sentiments, which we endeavor to defend. "As the full punishment, (says he,) of fallen angels, as well as of bad men, was deferred to the great day of general judgment; it was the opinion of many at that time, that some of those evil angels and spirits, were allowed, (though not without control,) to visit the region of our air, and this earth, and to inflict diseases and other calamities on men. Of this number," continues he, "are these unclean spirits,"

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meaning thereby those which went out of the man and passed into the swine, and which are, by the evangelists, denominated demons.

It is hence evident, from the concession of this learned writer, not only that many, at the time when our Saviour was on earth, were of opinion that wicked spirits superior to men, viz. fallen angels did inflict diseases; but that those unclean spirits, by the evangelists called demons, were of this number. In other words, that many did use the term *demon* then to denote a fallen angel. By consequence it was not exclusively used to express a departed human soul. (Lard. 1. 435.)

Lest the preceding remarks should appear, in any measure, obscure, I will again briefly state the great argument against possessions. First, it is laid down, that demons, to whom the sacred writers attribute possessions, were generally understood before and after the time of Christ, to be the heathen gods, or the souls of departed men :—It is then added, that the sacred writers, having given us no notice of using the term in a new or peculiar sense, did certainly employ it in reference to possessions, in the same sense, in which all others persons employed it. Therefore Christ and the evangelists could not design to assert, that the demoniacs were under any supernatural influence, whatever. In opposition to this, I have endeavored to show, I. That the conclusion does by no means result from the premises. II. That the only legitimate inference is, that the New Testament writers design to attribute certain disorders to pagan gods or the souls of dead men. III. That as this conclusion, which unavoidably results from the premises, does, by concession of those, who use the argument, contain a falsehood, there must be falsehood in the premises. IV. That accordingly, by the same concessions, the term demon, does not always mean departed human souls, but sometimes evil spirits of a rank, superior to mankind, and it is allowed by Dr. Lardner, that among many, in our Saviour's time, it signified a fallen angel: and lastly, That the supposition, were it necessary to make

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it, that the sacred writers did use the term demons in a sense, somewhat peculiar, would not be incredible.

The truth is, that the terms, answering to demon, have great variety of meaning. They mean in general beings superior to men. They may be supreme gods, or subordinate gods; or, merely spirits, whether good or bad,—whether of human or divine origin. By Scapula we are told, that *demon* means *god:* and that it is often indiscriminately applied to any god, or goddess. He quotes from Plato, a sentence in which the Governor of the universe is called *δαίμων μέγιστος*. *Demon*, on some occasions, seems to be synonymous with *genius*, and may be either good or bad. As we say, that a man was led to such an action, either by his good genius or by his bad genius. By the demon of Socrates is generally understood a guardian, or friendly spirit. Some philosophers, as has already been observed, taught, that demons were evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind. By others, human souls are called demons.—There is one term in popular use among ourselves, which I conceive, answers in general to the terms, which are used in Greek: I mean the word *spirits*. This word we apply to beings both good or bad: to God, to angels, to devils, and to the souls of dead men. The agreement between the words *δαίμονες*, in Greek, and *spirits* in English, will further appear, if we consider, that the demons mentioned in the Gospel are often denominated *unclean* or *evil spirits*.

Were it said in the Gospel, merely, that certain persons had demons, we could not thence conclude, that they were under bad influence, any more, than if it were said, that these persons had spirits. The character of the demons is to be learnt from the effects, which they produced; the language, in which they spake; and the manner in which our Saviour treated them.

It now appears, I hope, that on supposition, the possessions were real, and the persons demonized were under the influence of malignant spirits; there is nothing wonderful in the use, which our Saviour and the evangelists made of the corresponding Greek terms.

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The opponents, indeed, of the common opinion, often resort to this position: "Christ and the evangelists must have used language, as it is commonly understood, or as it was used by others;" but it is most certain, if their sentiments on the general subject be just, that he did not use language in this way.

In common use, by their own concession, the word δαιμονιζόμενος then expressed not only the disorder itself, whether of body or mind; but also the cause, whence it proceeded, namely, demons. But the New Testament writers, they tell us, mean to express by it the disorder itself, but not the cause. When a Greek or a Jew said of any one, that he was a demoniac, he meant to assert two things: 1. That he was, in a particular manner, disordered, and, 2. That this disorder was produced by evil spirits. But the writers of the New Testament, according to the sentiments which we oppose, when they used the like expression, meant the former of these, but not the latter.

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LECTURE LI.

ON DEMONIACS.

An objection against the doctrine of real possessions, drawn from the use of the term demon, was noticed in my last lecture. This term, it was there shown, is very general, and corresponds in a great degree, to the English word spirit. It does not designate the moral character of the being to whom it is applied. It is used in relation to the Supreme God, by Plato and Isocrates. It was used by certain philosophers, and afterwards by some of the christian fathers, to signify evil spirits of a rank superior to mankind. It was likewise used, and I apprehend, very commonly, to signify the souls of dead men.

The evangelists did not apply the term either in the first or the last of these senses, but in the second. They did not assert that demoniacs were disordered by the Supreme Deity, or by the spirits of the dead, but by spirits of a malignant character, and of a rank superior to men. The term is not used therefore in the New Testament, in a sense unknown among the Greeks.

But, even if it never had been by the Greeks applied to any beings, but the Supreme God, or human ghosts, we could not infer that the evangelists uniformly applied it to these objects. For they use the word θεὸς to signify Jehovah, a Being most strikingly different from the δαίμων μέγιστος and the deified heroes of antiquity, who were indiscriminately denominated θεοὶ.

I now proceed to notice a further objection; namely, that evil spirits seem never to have had such power at any other period of the world, or at any other place, as the common opin-

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ion supposes them to have possessed in Judea at the time of our Saviour.

This objection may be met, either by admitting or denying the fact.

1. Let the fact be conceded, that demoniacal possessions were seldom or never known, but in the land of Judea; and at the time, when Christ was engaged in his ministry on earth.

From the nature of the case, and from numerous express declarations in Scripture, it is evident that there is perpetual hostility between the interest of Christ, and that of Satan. The nature of the case teaches this, because the grand object of the one is to promote order, virtue, and happiness; that of the other to promote confusion, vice, and misery. The declarations of Scripture, to which I refer, are these: I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. (Gen. 3: 15.) For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. (1. John 3: 8). Again, I beheld Satan, as lightning fall from heaven. This last is termed by Bishop Warburton, "a strong and lively picture of the sudden precipitation of the prince of the air, from the place where he had so long held his usurpation, hanging like a pestilential meteor over the sons of men." The empire of Christ, it is evident, is to be established on the ruins of that which the malignant spirit began, when our first parents were allured to rebel.

Now, when our Saviour came to open his dispensation of grace and purity,—when he came to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God;"—when the minds of men were to be redeemed from the slavery of prejudice and crimes, it was to have been supposed, that whatever power over their bodies was permitted to Satan, would be employed with peculiar assiduity and virulence; as it is said in the Apocalypse: The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath because he knoweth he hath but a short time. Nor is it improbable, that, to render the triumph of Christ the more signal and obvious, restraints on infernal malignity and power, a

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little previous to our Saviour's ministry, might have been, in some degree, diminished.

But 2. We are under no necessity of granting, that demoniacal possessions were confined to the time at which our Saviour appeared; or even that they were more frequent then, than previously.

The learned writer against the common opinion concerning demoniacs, not only acknowledges this, but takes much pains to prove it. With respect to demoniacs, says he, we meet with them in writings of the greatest antiquity, particularly in Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. They occur also in the ancient historians, as well as in the writings of physicians. With respect to the philosophers, it is needless to appeal to the testimony of particular persons; for demonology composed a very eminent part of the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy. That possessions were supposed common among the Jews, is evident from Josephus, who speaks of persons having lived many ages before his time, who were distinguished for their skill in exorcism. That possessions were not confined to Judea, is further evident from the Acts of the Apostles. The following occurrence happened at Ephesus: Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them, that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus. The universality of demoniacal possessions appears from Plutarch, as quoted by McKnight, in which a method of treating them is mentioned as practised by most nations.

Now, whether such methods of ejecting demons were whimsical or not, is perfectly immaterial to our present purpose, which is to show, that cases of supposed possession were not peculiar to the age and country of our Saviour.

It may, perhaps, be thought a very strong presumption against this, that we find nothing of this nature at the present day. If evil spirits had once both the disposition and the power to enter and molest human bodies, why, it may be asked, are no similar effects now produced? I answer, that our inability to account for such a fact, is no argument against it. We are unable to

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perceive, why some wicked men are permitted to accomplish their designs, while others are restrained. We are unable to show why the plot of Haman for burying in ruins all the captive Jews, was rendered abortive, while that of Herod for murdering the infants was suffered to take effect. We are unable to tell, why Paul was rescued from the forty conspirators, who had vowed his destruction, while on Stephen they were permitted to satiate their malice.

But though our inability to account for a fact asserted, does by no means disprove the assertion; and there might be reasons, why demoniacal possessions should be suffered at one period and not at another, though such reasons were concealed from us, the remark may not be necessary on the present occasion. We are able to assign at least a probable reason for this difference. Since the coming of Christ, the power of Satan over the human mind has unquestionably been restrained. The moral condition of those countries, in which pure Christianity has been promulgated, is changed materially for the better. Now, why should not this influence be restrained, as well in regard to the bodies, as the minds of men? And why should not the triumph of the Saviour be made apparent in both cases? If the common opinion be correct, it has been apparent in both.

A further objection to the doctrine of real possessions is this: St. Paul says, in the 8th chap. of 1 Cor.: We know, that an idol is nothing in the world; and the same idea is evidently communicated in the 10th chapter: What do I say, then, that the idol is any thing? But this I say, that the things, which the Gentiles sacrifice, they do sacrifice unto demons, and not unto God. Now it is asserted that idols and demons are the same. If so, we have the declaration of St. Paul, that demons are nothing in the world. Consequently, they could not have produced those effects on human bodies, which have been usually ascribed to them.

Without saying any thing as to the identity of idols and demons in this place, which is however not indisputable, I observe,

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that the objection proves too much for those by whom it is offered. They believe that demons are the souls of dead men; and surely St. Paul did not mean to teach the doctrine of annihilation, by saying that the souls of dead men are nothing, i. e. that the soul has no existence after death. By consequence, the expression must be understood with some limitation. When the Apostle asserted, that an idol is nothing in the world, if he used the word εἴδωλον as synonymous with δαίμων, he must have meant merely that an idol is no god, and as such is not to be regarded. That this is the meaning of the place, expositors seem generally agreed. It is thus expounded by Doddridge, Whitby, McKnight and Piscator.

Again, the account given of the damsel at Philippi, is supposed by some to militate with the common ideas of the demoniacal possession. The account is this: It came to pass, that as we went to prayer, a certain damsel, possessed with a spirit of divination, met us. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation. Paul, being grieved, turned and said unto the spirit, I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to come out of her. And he came out the same hour. That which our translators call a spirit of divination, is in the original πνεῦμα πύθωνος; spirit of Python. Now, Apollo, it is well known, has frequently the epithet Pythius, and his priestess at Delphi was denominated Pythia. "It is here asserted then," says the objector, "that the damsel hath a pythonic spirit, or the spirit of Apollo. But who can believe that either the sacred writer, or St. Paul designed to assert any connexion, as subsisting between this disordered person and a heathen god? Therefore, the meaning must be, that the person in question was insane, and that her insanity was of such a kind, as was usually attributed to that prophetic spirit, which was supposed to actuate the priestess at Delphi;" and if so, the word demonized may be used with similar latitude.

Such is the objection, and I frankly acknowledge, that in my apprehension, it has more weight than any other brought to

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oppose the common opinion. Still I conceive it not insurmountable.

I concede at once, that the sacred writer did not mean to assert any connexion between the disordered person and a heathen god. I am willing to allow too, that merely the circumstance of her being said to have the spirit of Python, is not sufficient to prove her a demoniac. That she was such, however, is shown by other circumstances. Paul commanded the spirit to come out of her, and it came out the same hour; at which time, her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone: that they should no longer be paid for her soothsaying, i. e. foretelling future events; the power of doing which could not surely result from insanity, or from bodily distemper.

By the term spirit of Python, the sacred writer means merely a prophesying spirit. Whatever reference the term once had to Apollo, by long use, this reference seems to have been lost. Accordingly Abp. Potter and Scapula, define *πύθων*, a prophesying demon. From the former of these authors, I quote the following remarks. "As to the origin of this name, there are various conjectures: the most probable of which seems to be, that it was taken from Apollo Pythias, who was thought to preside over all sorts of divination, and afterwards appropriated by custom to this species: for so we find a great many words of general signification, in time made peculiar to some one part of what they signified before. To give one instance, *τύραννος*, by the ancient Greeks, was applied to all kings, as well the just and merciful, as the cruel, and whom we now call tyrannical: but in more modern ages, was appropriated to the latter sort, and became a name of the greatest ignominy and detestation. On the contrary, words of a more narrow and limited sense, have sometimes passed their bounds, and taken upon them a more general and unconfined one: so *μαντεῖα*, which at first signified only that sort of prophesying, which was inspired with rage and fury, being derived *ἀπο τοῦ μαίνεσθαι*, from being mad, came at length to be a general name for all sorts of divination."

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To those of you who give most attention to this subject, the following idea, perhaps, at this moment occurs; viz. that the word δαιμονιζόμενος, may have lost some part of its original import, as well as the phrase ἔχειν πνεῦμα πύθωνος. And why may we not suppose, that the evangelists had as little reference to any evil spirits, when they used the former, as the writer of the Acts had to Apollo, when he used the latter?

This I conceive to be exhibiting the objection in the strongest possible light. To which my answer is this. I do not consider the doctrine of real possessions, as proved merely by the circumstance, that the persons in question are said to be demonized, or to have demons; but chiefly by the manner, in which they are addressed by our Saviour, by their conduct, and by the remarks, which the evangelists make on the subject, all which will be more particularly considered hereafter.

At present I proceed to notice another objection, which is, that the common belief concerning demoniacs is attended with dangerous consequences. "Endless superstitions," says Mr. Farmer, "hath the doctrine of possessions generated among mankind." It is further asserted to be inconsistent with those ideas of divine government, which are clearly revealed in Scripture, and even with the proof of revelation by miracles.

I. The doctrine is said to have produced endless superstitions. That there have been many superstitions, which, without this doctrine, would not have existed, may be safely allowed. But the abuse of any assertion or doctrine, does by no means prove its falsity. It is not easy to mention any doctrine, whether of natural or revealed religion, which has not been abused. I know not whether there would be any superstition, existing in the world, were there no belief in God, and a divine providence. But would this be a good argument in favor of atheism? Perhaps no law was ever enacted, which has not been abused. Perhaps no system of education was ever adopted, of which some persons have not made a bad use. As Christianity itself is not, so neither is any particular view of Christianity,

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answerable for those absurdities or crimes, which do not flow from it by legitimate consequence.

II. It is said, that the doctrine of possessions is inconsistent with those ideas of divine government, which are clearly revealed in Scripture; in which ideas it is implied, that God alone is the Governor of the world; for the opinion in question, it is asserted, seems to allow the existence of other beings, able to oppose him, and disconcert his purposes.

I answer, that this objection can have no weight in application to any denomination of Christians now in existence. Against the ancient Manicheans, who believed the eternity of an evil prince, it would have been forcible; because they supposed this evil being not completely under the control of the good being. But those who embrace the common opinion as to demoniacs, do not suppose that demons are less under the divine control, or less dependant on God, than wicked men. The latter habitually break the divine laws, oppose the benevolent purposes of God's government, and produce great disorder and misery on earth. Now, if this is not inconsistent with those ideas, which the Scriptures give us of the divine supremacy, neither is that doctrine, which attributes similar effects to spirits of a more elevated rank.

If the supremacy of God is not impaired, when a passionate man inflicts such a wound on his neighbor, as injures his health, or produces delirium, neither would it be impaired, if the same effect were produced by an invisible demon.

Though the Scriptures uniformly represent the Deity as presiding over the universe, and every other creature as absolutely under his control, they are no less uniform in declaring, that the government which God maintains, is carried on through a great variety of means and subordinate agents. Angels are employed for purposes both of grace and severity. By an angel was David punished for numbering the people. By an angel was destroyed the vast Assyrian army. The angels of the Lord encamp about his saints: They are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation. To

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promote the same general object, but in a capacity more humble and confined, he employs virtuous men. Men of a different character exist under his government, and are by no means inactive. Even them too, he often employs, in fulfilling the purposes of his infinite wisdom; not by impelling them to sin,—not by infusing into them evil desires; but by overruling, to the best purposes, those actions, which, without such impulse or infusion, they choose to perform.

Now, if there be vicious beings of a rank superior to men, it is strikingly analogous, that they too should be suffered to exhibit their characters, i. e. to perform vicious actions, and that these actions should be so restrained and overruled, as to advance those designs, which it was their tendency to impede, or render abortive.

But III. The doctrine of demoniacal possessions is said to be inconsistent with the proof of divine revelation which arises from miracles. For if evil spirits can produce such effects, as this opinion ascribes to them, how can we be certain, that any system of religion is of divine origin, merely because it is accompanied by miracles.—To this I reply,

1. That from the perfections of God, and from facts recorded in Scripture, we may be confident, that no invisible agent will ever be permitted to exhibit such works in favor of falsehood, as are not accompanied with greater works in favor of the truth. We can by no means imagine, that God would remove restraints from invisible agents, with intention that men should be deceived. If, therefore, visible effects are permitted, contrary to the established course of events, with design to confirm a lie, we may be confident, that greater effects will be produced, by which such proof will be counteracted. Accordingly we find, that when the magicians entered into contest with Moses, and either performed real miracles by infernal influence, or practised legerdemain with great dexterity, he, by the finger of God, was enabled to cover with shame, those, who instituted the competition.

2. There is another criterion of very great value; I mean

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the moral tendency of those doctrines, in favor of which the miracles are wrought. No external evidence would be sufficient to convince us of the divine origin of a system, enjoining, or decidedly allowing immorality.

But the objection we are now considering, whether brought against revelation, or against that particular tenet, which implies the influence of demons, is, I apprehend, of very little practical importance. For, there is not probably a person on earth, tolerably enlightened, who would reject Christianity, if once convinced, that those miracles recorded in the Gospel were in fact wrought. Persons may pretend to disbelieve, and some do disbelieve, that the miracles attributed to Christ, were ever wrought; but for many centuries, no infidel, after acknowledging these, has rejected the Gospel. Such an absurdity, after all the proof which has been given of the benign influence which Christianity has on the human character, will, it is probable, never again be witnessed.

But suppose you were to meet a person, of so extraordinary a cast of mind, as to allow the truth of evangelical history, so far as it relates to the expulsion of demons by our Saviour, and yet professing himself wholly uncertain, as to the moral character of Christ, and whether his miraculous powers were derived from above or beneath. Concerning the moral character of possessing demons, he could have no doubt. Their malignity was rendered sufficiently plain, by the sufferings which they occasioned, and by the torments which they acknowledged were in reserve for them. The interest of Christ, it is evident, was opposite to theirs. To those whom they afflicted, he restored sanity both of body and mind. Our Saviour himself showed the absurdity, as well as impiety of the opinion, that he cast out demons by infernal influence. "If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself: how then shall his kingdom stand?" With such an objector as we have supposed, you have nothing further do do, than to ask, Whether it be a matter of uncertainty, that the opposite of darkness is light; and the opposite of malignity, is benevolence? Whether a person in

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league with the powers of darkness, would have done more towards enlightening this world, not only than any individual, whether prince or philosopher, but incomparably more than all inspired men of every age? Whether a person whose character was that of deceit, consummate falsehood and impiety, as the character of Jesus must have been, if he wrought miracles by infernal power, would have set himself, *summis viribus*, against every vice, every prejudice, and corrupt propensity: and while he exhibited in his own life, unparalleled and untarnished purity, would have communicated to the world a system of religion, which was never embraced by a nation, a community, or an individual, without producing an extraordinary measure of happiness and virtue; a religion whose votaries are the excellent of the earth, just in proportion as they honor its author nd conform to his precepts.

But you will never, I am confident, have occasion to resort to this reasoning. You will never meet a person, who, after being convinced that Christ wrought the miracles, which are attributed to him, will deny the truth and divinity of the Gospel. Whenever he acknowledges, that Jesus did eject demons, no doubts will be pretended, whether it were done by Beelzebub, or by the finger of God.

Now if a vast majority of Christians, far from being stumbled at the doctrine of demoniacal possessions, believe Christianity the more firmly on account of that power which Christ displayed in counteracting them; and if infidels do never reason in the manner which the objector supposes, and if they did, could be answered with perfect facility, how little ground does this objection afford for discarding the opinion usually received.

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LECTURE LII.

ON DEMONIACS.

It is my present object to consider some of those passages in the New Testament, which relate to demoniacal possessions; that we may better judge, whether they can be reconciled with the opinion, that nothing more is meant, than bodily distempers.

In giving an account of our Saviour's preparing his twelve apostles for their ministry, Mark uses the following language: And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out demons. Here, you perceive, that the ejection of demons is clearly distinguished from the cure of diseases. Now, if demonized persons were merely under the influence of natural disorders, why should the sacred historian make this distinction? On this supposition, it is very evident, that the latter clause conveys no new idea at all; it only reiterates part of what has just been asserted. Say, if you please, that demonized persons had a particular kind of disorder. Be it so. The language will, however, be precisely similar to this: He sent them forth to cure sickness, and to cure fevers. What conceivable need is there for adding the latter clause?

In the Gospel of St. Luke, we find observed the same distinction between those who were demonized and those who were sick; for he speaks of "certain women, who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities;" and when the twelve disciples were actually sent forth, their commission was couched in similar language: Then called he his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure dis-

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eases. Further, Jesus said in relation to Herod: Go and tell that fox, Behold I cast out demons, and do cures.

Now, let it be considered, that whatever may be the truth, as to demoniacal possessions, the Jews, in our Saviour's time, did believe in them. And is it not extremely evident, that the language which our Saviour used, was calculated to confirm them in their opinion? The sentiment if true, is an error of no inconsiderable magnitude. According to the ideas of our opponents, it is an error of great magnitude. It has filled the world, they tell us, with various kinds of superstition. It is inconsistent with scriptural ideas of divine supremacy, and even with that proof of revelation, which arises from miracles. But if this be true, our Saviour must have known it, as well as the gentlemen who make these remarks. Is it not then surprising, that he said nothing to correct the error? But he did more than barely to leave them in quiet possession of the opinion; he did much, it would seem, to establish it. This will further appear from other passages. The following account is given us by St. Luke: When he came forth to land, there met him out of the city a man which had demons a long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs, when he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For often times it had caught him; and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the demon into the wilderness. And Jesus asked of the demon, What is thy name? And he said, Legion, because many demons had entered into him. And they besought him, that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was an herd of many swine, feeding on the mountain, And they besought him, that he would suffer them to enter into them; and he suffered them. Then went the demons out of the man and entered into the swine. And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

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Here you will observe, the demon is represented as speaking repeatedly, and as offering a request. If the demoniac were under the influence merely of a bodily distemper, what was it, which asked permission to enter the swine? Was it the distemper? The very idea is absurd. Was it the man himself? "Yes, replies an opponent, he fancied himself possessed by an evil spirit, and believed that the spirit through the medium of his organs made this request." There would be plausibility in this reply, but for the two following considerations; 1. If such were the fancy of the insane person, why should our Saviour, who came to diffuse truth, and not to establish errors, use such language, as was obviously calculated to leave this impression on all present, that demons were concerned in the case? That his words are thus calculated I need not assert, after having read them.

2. The request was granted: Then went the demons out of the man, and entered into the swine. Surely this was not the demoniac; for he, at this time, was cured. Yet, whatever it was, it was the same, which asked the liberty. It was therefore, neither the man, nor the distemper. The inference seems undeniable. I therefore repeat the question, which has been proposed. Why did our Saviour and the evangelists, use such language, as tended to confirm a popular error, especially if, as many assert, the error tends to produce extensive mischief? Or rather, can it be supposed that they did so?

To this inquiry the opponents of the doctrine under examination reply, "That it is no unusual thing for all sorts of persons, and particularly the divinely commissioned instructors of mankind, to adopt the popular language, without designing to countenance the opinion on which the language was originally founded." In proof of this, they tell us that the sacred writers speak of the rising and setting of the sun, though the succession of a day and night is well known to proceed not from the revolution of the sun, but of the earth.

In answer to this I observe, that there are three cases, in which popular language, founded on false opinion, may be

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adopted. 1. When it is difficult to change the popular phraseology, and when the error on which it is founded is of no importance. This applies to passages of Scripture, in which the sun is said to rise and set, and to rejoice in running his race. It is so difficult to alter this phraseology, that philosophers have not attempted it. They speak of the sun passing through the Zodiac, and of the sun's rising and setting, with as much constancy as the common people. The error, so far as morality or religion is concerned, is perfectly innocent. The system of Copernicus has done nothing towards rendering the obligations of virtue either stronger or weaker.

2. Popular language, though founded in error, may be used, when its original import is no longer restrained; as a vile person may be termed a villain, though we have no reference to the tenure of land; and a person of vivacity may be called sprightly, though we have no belief in the existence of sprights. For this reason, as we have endeavored to show, the writer of the Acts was justified in saying of the damsel at Philippi, that she had πνεῦμα πύθωνος, though he had no belief that she was inspired by Apollo. The phrase, we believe, had lost its primitive reference, and expressed nothing more than the term prophesying spirit.

But, 3. The case is widely different, when popular language is used under such circumstances as render it probable, and almost certain, that persons who hear will be confirmed in dangerous errors. Now the belief of demoniacal possessions, is, by those who reject it, considered an error of great magnitude, and of a tendency extremely mischievous. Why then, I repeat it, if our Saviour and the evangelists were of the same opinion, did they use such language as tended directly to establish the error?

The answer which has been given, you perceive, is by no means satisfactory, because the two cases compared are so extremely different.

Nor does it appear, that our Lord and the evangelists were under any necessity of using the popular language, that con-

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veyed a wrong idea. It was as easy to say of persons, that they were insane or disordered, as to say that they were demonized. When Christ commissioned his apostles, if he designed to give them authority to cure diseases only, it was perfectly easy to stop at that sentence, which imparted this power. It is not conceivable on this ground, that the mention of demons was necessary. If they had received authority to cure diseases in general, it is incredible that they should have scrupled, in relation to any particular disease, whether it came within their commission.

If, therefore, demoniacal possessions were only a species of disorder, it seems to have been wholly unnecessary to mention it distinctly. On a certain occasion, there came to Christ a man kneeling down, and saying: Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed. St. Matthew goes on to say, in a following verse, that the demon departed out of him. Now, as the father was contented to call his son a lunatic, it cannot be pretended, I think, that the evangelist was under any necessity of calling him a demoniac. And that he did so, clearly proves, that in his opinion the latter term was better of the two; i. e. that a demon was concerned in producing the disorder.

A similar observation may be made in regard to many other passages. For instance, had it been difficult for the sacred writers to avoid the popular appellative, when speaking of persons having that particular species of disorder called possession; yet surely it was not necessary to assert, that the demons spake, that they exhibited fears of being tormented, and that they asked permission to pass from one animal body into another.

With design to remove the difficulty which we are now considering, it has been said, that Christ and his apostles received no commission to instruct men in the nature of diseases. They found men under the influence of various disorders, either of body or mind. Some of these disorders were attributed to evil spirits. Whether the disorders did thus originate, or not, was a question which neither Christ nor his apostles were commissioned to determine.

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I answer, that our only way of knowing what Christ was commissioned to teach, is to consider what he did in fact teach. If then Christ did not teach any thing, as to the cause of those disorders denominated possessions, it is indeed certain, that he had no commission to do it. But that you perceive is the very point at issue. The respondent then, endeavors to remove an objection, by assuming the truth of that, against which the objection is made.

Besides, I have endeavored to show, that our Saviour and the evangelists use such language, as was calculated, if the doctrine of demoniacal possession be false, to confirm the Jews, in an important error. Is it a sufficient answer to say, that they were not commissioned to do otherwise? Is a special commission requisite to authorise men not to use such language, as can hardly fail of confirming or producing false opinions? I should apprehend, that whatever scruples were entertained in the case would be against the use, and not against the omission of such language.

As a further proof of the common opinion, we may mention those passages in sacred history, which assert, that the demons knew Christ. Luke 4: 34, And in the synagogue, there was a man, who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, let us alone. What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth.—Mark 1: 34, And he healed many, that were sick of diverse diseases, and cast out many demons; and suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him. Now, what reason can be imagined, why persons, under the influence of natural insanity, should have more knowledge of Christ, than others, in quiet exercise of their rational powers?

I ask your attention to the following passage in the evangelical history. When Jesus had rebuked the evil spirit, who had uttered his name, it is said, that "he came out of him, and hurt him not." How extraordinary is this remark, if nothing is here meant, but a natural disorder! Does it usually hurt men to be free from diseases? Is it strange, that a man should be

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no worse for being restored to health? Is it probable, that a writer, under the influence of inspiration or of common sense, should suppose, that any reader stood in need of such information? But if we adopt the common opinion, as to possessions, this is perfectly intelligible. For, on another occasion, when our Lord had commanded a dumb and deaf spirit to come out of an afflicted person: the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, insomuch, that many said, he is dead. Now, if evil spirits, on leaving the bodies of those whom they had afflicted, sometimes exercised their malignity in augmenting the sufferer's pains, it was perfectly natural, that the evangelist should notice an instance, in which nothing of this was suffered to take place.

But the passage is much to our purpose, if viewed in another light. It is said, that the "spirit cried out, and rent him sore, and came out of him." If the term *spirit* is not here to be taken literally, it must mean either the disorder or the man himself. But taking either of these, as the meaning, there will be no sense in the passage. In one case it will be, the disease cried out; in the other, the man came out of himself!

Again, the words of our Saviour to his apostles, when returning from their mission, well deserve our notice: And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us, through thy name. And he said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. This answer of our Saviour, taken in connexion with the address of the disciples, seems clearly to suggest this idea, that there is an important relation between the cure of demoniacs and the falling of Satan; that the former implied the diminution of infernal influence.

I have now laid before you the most obvious arguments in favor of the doctrine of demoniacal possessions; together with most of the objections, which are made to it. There is one, however, which has been intentionally reserved for this place.

The common opinion, it is said, has an ill influence on the success of Christianity, which may, in some instances, be disbelieved on this account.

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I answer, that if the opinion is not supported by Scripture, it is doubtless to be rejected. If it is thus supported, we have no right to expunge or conceal it, for the purpose of conciliating infidels or sceptics. Those who reject Christianity, must abide the result. That the doctrine contains nothing abhorrent from reason, and nothing of course which ought to produce scepticism as to Christianity, I endeavored to show in the first lecture. To reduce Christianity to the taste of mankind, has often been assayed; but with too little success to encourage a repetition of the experiment.

The present attempt, I apprehend, however, is really calculated to produce that scepticism, which it aims at preventing.

Suppose, for instance, you meet a deist, who informs you that one important reason why he disbelieves the gospel, is, the extraordinary accounts there given of the influence of demons on human bodies. You offer to remove the difficulty, by telling him, that you believe as little of that as he does; informing him, at the same time, that though much is said of demons in the New Testament, our Lord and the evangelists, prudently accommodating themselves to the prejudices, which then prevailed, meant nothing more than natural disorders. He refers you to particular places, showing, that these demons are treated as living agents,—that they are said to speak, to tell who Jesus was, to ask permission to go from one animal body into another, and to speak of a time when they shall be tormented. You acknowledge, that all this is true; but endeavor to convince him, that it implies nothing inconsistent with the most perfect integrity and virtue. Of this, I think, you would not easily convince him. But, if you should, and he should feel himself pressed with those abundant and various proofs, which support the Gospel, he would find much relief in the very idea, which you had conveyed; he would say, If the New Testament writers use language with such extraordinary freedom,—if they make such amazing concessions to the prejudices and errors of men, no person can have any distinct view of what was in fact their meaning;—no one can be certain, when they re-

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late things, as they were in truth, and when they relate them, as they appeared to vulgar and prejudiced minds. Such would unquestionably be the success of your experiment.

I am far from asserting, that Christianity could not be proved, if the opinion in question were assented to. Its evidences are so numerous, strong, and various, that if something were taken away, there would still be enough to ensure assent from the upright and impartial. But it cannot be denied, that the opinion, under consideration, if proved, (as it never can be,) would envelope revealed religion in so dense a mist, as to take much from that distinctness, with which its various objects are otherwise viewed. Nor have I any doubt, that the number of infidels and indifferent believers would be rendered somewhat greater, than it is at present.

The lecture will be closed with some remarks of a practical nature.

I. It ought to excite our gratitude, that all vicious and malignant spirits are under the control of a benevolent, wise and powerful Being.

The state of human society would be most unhappy, were no restraints imposed on the passions of men. Even now, deeds of the greatest brutality, malice and ferocity are sometimes witnessed. Yet, the restraints imposed by morality and civil government, are almost without number. What then would be the condition of man, if these were universally removed! Hence we learn to appreciate the blessings of good government. But those spirits, whose existence the Scriptures so clearly assert, are superior to man. They far exceed him, both in power and malignity; and, but for the gracious and unremitting providence of God, would render this earth a scene of universal and indescribable desolation and horror.

II. Though we have no evidence that natural evils are now produced by the agency of malignant spirits, we are told, that the minds of men are yet subject to the corrupting influence of that being, whom the inspired writers denominate *the god of this world*. Our Saviour directed his disciples to pray, *Lead*

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us not into temptation; and considering the mention which he frequently made of this designing and malevolent being, it cannot be doubted, that his devices constitute a great part of that temptation, against which we are to pray for security. St. Peter inspired by the Holy Spirit, had no idea that the danger, hence resulting, was imaginary: Be sober; be vigilant; for your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

It becomes us then, to maintain sobriety and caution, and to cultivate a sense of our dependence on Him, whose attributes are engaged for the salvation of all who obey him.

III. Though our present connexion with incorporeal spirits is neither visible nor intimate, it will in both these respects be different in a future life. The two great communities, which constitute God's moral kingdom, will then be clearly distinguished. Similar characters, to whatever order of beings they once belonged, will then be united. Virtuous men will resemble angels, and be united with them: When they shall arise from the dead, saith our Saviour, they shall be as the angels, which are in heaven. Lazarus, we are told, "was carried by angels, into Abraham's bosom." The author of the epistle to the Hebrews uses the following very animating language: Ye are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.

Between bad men and evil spirits the connexion will be no less intimate. There is at present a similarity of character. Both violate the divine law, and contemn the divine government; though the latter do it with more constancy and daring, than the former. To the Jews our Saviour said: Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. Of the place, prepared for the reception and punishment of rebellious spirits, they will not be the sole occupants. Thither, has

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our Saviour informed us, all impenitent human beings will be commanded to depart. We are now preparing to associate with one of these great divisions. Every vicious habit, every vicious action or thought, tends to assimilate us to the great community of reprobate spirits; every habit and every action, implying real virtue, tends to prepare us for the most honorable communion and intercourse with angels. If then you have ambition, Christianity proposes to you an object most worthy of it. If you desire glory, it offers you glory, honor and immortality. If you aspire, let it be to nothing less, than to celestial thrones; —to a participation among them, for whom a kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world.

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SERMONS.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION ON THE MOUNT.

LUKE 9: 28—36. And it came to pass, about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And behold there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elias; who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him, were heavy with sleep; and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and they feared, as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is my bebelowed Son; hear him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days, any of those things which they had seen.

EXCEPTING Moses, who on Mount Sinai talked with God face to face, and St. Paul, who was caught up to the third heaven, and heard unutterable words, no person on earth seems ever to have enjoyed such extraordinary honor and heavenly converse, as were allowed to these disciples, who witnessed the transfiguration of Christ. The vision, here described, as well it might, made a very deep and lasting impression on their minds, as appears from Peter's very extraordinary proposal and from the mention, which he makes of this event in one of his epistles, written many years after; in which epistle he speaks of being an eye witness of his majesty: for he received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son, in whom

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I am well pleased. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the mount.

Our design is, that the present discourse should consist of those observations which naturally present themselves from that very interesting portion of Scripture, which we have read.

In the first place, the occasion may suggest the duty of family religion. It is true that our blessed Lord, after beginning his public ministry, could never with propriety be said to live in a family state. The right discharge of his ministry required, that he should be almost continually travelling from place to place. He had, however, a number of disciples, who were peculiarly endeared to him; and with whom he used frequently to offer prayers to God. These disciples were, in a sense, his family. He cared for them, rebuked, corrected and taught them; he taught them how to pray, and himself led in their devotions. The text begins with saying that on a certain time he took Peter, James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray.

This example of Christ severely reproves the sloth, or impiety of those heads of families, who either entirely neglect prayer, or perform it in a cold, hasty manner; or else make the performance of it depend wholly on the state of their worldly business. Should we judge of the opinions of many persons, by their conduct in this respect, we should conclude that every creature, in their view, ought to be served before the Creator; and that any interest of a worldly kind ought to be more regarded than the interests of the soul and eternity. How different is such an opinion, from that of our Saviour, who said: Seek first the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof;—and who gave himself a sacrifice to God to save us from the present evil world, and deliver us from the wrath to come! Their spot, saith Moses, is not the spot of his children. In the exercise of all reasonable charity, I can hardly believe it possible, that such a mark should be found on a real disciple and friend of Christ. It betrays such indifference to the soul and to God; such stupidity and false notions as to the comparative

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value of time and eternity; such ingratitude to Christ for his sufferings and his Gospel, as it is very difficult, if not wholly impossible, to reconcile with a gracious and saving state. Our Saviour would go up even into a mountain, rather than not have a convenient place to pray with his disciples.

While our blessed Lord was engaged in devout exercises, we are told that his person assumed a very extraordinary appearance:—his visage and his raiment were altered. His face did shine as the sun; and his raiment was as white as the light; white and glistering, so as no fuller on earth can white it. In like manner, after Moses had been on the mount with God, his face appeared resplendent: The skin of his face shone.

This suggests to us the great and excellent change, that might be produced in the character of Christians, did they make it a business to maintain devout communion with God; which communion should comprehend not only family, but daily secret prayer. If Christians would not content themselves with the form of family religion; but would strive after a devout and humble frame, and seek for a praying spirit,—a spirit of grace and supplication, when they engage in family worship:—if, moreover, they were constant in maintaining evangelical worship in secret;—if they would in all things, with prayer and supplication, let their requests be made known unto God, if they would freely own and lament before God their inward corruptions, their indifference in religious pursuits, their want of animation and fixedness of thought in prayer; if they would strive to view sin and themselves in that point of light in which the Gospel places them, and to be affected with a consideration of the great things which Christ has done for human recovery and salvation:—if, moreover, they would bring the spiritual world and eternal objects full into their view, it would, without question, produce a very great and salutary effect on their visible deportment. Though no streams of material light would issue from their countenances and raiment, as did from Christ at his transfiguration, and from the countenance of Moses after he had been in the mount with God; yet from them would

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beam forth a light shining before men. They would have a more constant sense of things divine;—more meekness and kindness towards men, stronger desires to promote their present and everlasting interest. They would be more resigned to the divine will; less affected with any worldly calamities; more conscientiously exact in all relative and social duties; more observant of the language of divine providence, and earnest to comply with its import. There would, in all probability, be such an increase of Christian graces, as would induce beholders to take knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus—their path would resemble the shining light, which shineth more and more until the perfect day.

3. At the happy season of the transfiguration, the blessed Jesus had intercourse with Moses and Elias, who appeared in glory, and spake unto him.

There is now, in a certain sense, a union between Christ's real disciples on earth and those in heaven. This union will, hereafter, be actual, agreeably to the words of Christ: Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am. There shall then be but one fold, as there is now but one shepherd. It must be exceedingly desirable, therefore, for every Christian to be growing into a fitness to enjoy the society of saints in light, an increasing preparation to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God: and nothing is likely to be more efficacious to this end, than humble and frequent intercourse with God in prayer. That Christian who takes most pleasure in conversing with God, is most habituated to this exercise, and engaged in it, is best fitted to relish the company of God's children in a glorified state. As it was an hour of prayer, when our Lord with these highly favored disciples had communion with Moses and Elias, we may reasonably suppose, that those Christian hours of secret and family devotion are greatly instrumental through divine grace, of preparing him for the most glorious and happy communion of saints.

4. It appears that Moses and Elias conversed with Christ, concerning his death, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

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We may hence take occasion to observe, that habitual and truly Christian devotion has a great tendency to diminish the terror of death, by fixing on the mind, a lively and pleasing impression of the heavenly world. The more intercourse believers maintain with God, and the heavenly state, the more they devote themselves to meditation on those great discoveries of the invisible world, made in the Scriptures, the less unwilling will they probably be, to meet death. If they have their conversation in heaven, they will be glad to be there personally; and if they have maintained a daily walk with God, and have had comfortable and edifying communion with him from time to time; if their desires go out after him, and those seasons which they spend with God are the most pleasant seasons of their lives, this seems to be good proof of their being formed to a holy temper, and fitted for that rest, which remains for God's people. A relish for the employments and exercises of heaven; a cordial preference of them before all worldly delights, is a good evidence of a sanctified heart.

As Moses and Elias conversed with our Saviour concerning his own death, we are hereby reminded how suitable it is that Christians, when together, should occasionally converse on their approaching dissolution. It would prevent unbecoming levity, give solemnity to conversation, and turn those seasons to good account, which might otherwise pass without any profit. Why should we not speak of our own death? It is a change, which we cannot avoid; our forbearance to converse of it will not retard its approach a single day. It may render our condition worse; but cannot make it better. If Christians would converse one with another, on their views of death and eternity;—freely communicate their fears, and their hopes, in regard to this important subject, it would doubtless be greatly for their mutual benefit. They would then find, that their own feelings, fears, and inward trials, were not so singular as they might have imagined. This would give a degree of hope and confidence. It is as true in religious matters, as in any other, that

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two are better than one, and that as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.

5. At this season of holy communion with God, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I well pleased. There Christ was expressly acknowledged to be the Son of God, by a voice from the excellent glory. In like manner, God is never more likely to acknowledge his children,—to give them a comfortable perception of their justified state, than when they are deeply engaged in communion with him. It is readily granted, that there is a great diversity in God's treatment of his children. To some, the evidence of their own adoption is much more satisfactory, than to others; and some, there is reason to believe, are continually distressed with doubts. Very few general rules will apply to all cases. But many have, in prayer, experienced the most clear and comforting light of God's countenance. They have not indeed heard a voice from the excellent glory, pronouncing these words, "Thou art my beloved Son," but they have felt that blessed submission to God, that earnest desire of soul to become perfectly like him and eternally with him, which afforded very joyful hope of their being really and truly his children. But we are not to suppose that the Christian's state of mind will be always alike, any more than was the condition of his Master, while on earth; for although Christ was, at his baptism, and on the mount, acknowledged by a voice from heaven to be the Son of God, yet in the hour of darkness, we hear him exclaim: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? No wonder that the servant should not fare better than his lord, nor he that is sent, better than he who sent him. No wonder, that the disciples of Christ, experience hours of darkness, and apparent desertion, even after they have obtained a degree of evidence of their good state, which is generally to their satisfaction and joy.

6. Though Christians sometimes experience that enlargement in religious exercises, that delight in conversing with God, which no language can fully express, and to which no worldly

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enjoyments bear any proportion, yet it is far most prudent to speak of these comfortable seasons but sparingly, and never but among intimate Christian friends. When our Lord, with three of his disciples, had enjoyed such a heavenly scene and interview, on the mount: they kept it close, and told no man, in those days, any of those things, which they had seen. When Moses had been honored with a vision of God, in Horeb, and received his commission to lead out the children of Israel from Egypt, he returned to his father in law, Jethro, to request liberty to visit his brethren; but said not a word of the vision, nor of his intercourse with God.

Under prudent restrictions, however, it may be very profitable and edifying to converse on these devout enjoyments; but in this as well as in all temporal and spiritual concerns, wisdom is profitable to direct.

7. Notwithstanding Peter was admitted to this heavenly vision on the mount; to behold his divine Master, whose face shone as the sun, and whose robes were white as the light, and to see Moses and Elias, appearing in glory, yet afterwards, this same Peter was left to deny this same glorious Master.—Hence we ought to learn, that no enlargement in prayer, and no manifestation of the divine love, ought to make us feel secure against sin, or lead us to imagine that our mountain stands strong. We must still view ourselves as feeble, inconstant, sinful creatures, who possess no strength, but what they obtain from above. We must still watch and strive against sin; we must still view ourselves, as encompassed with infirmities, and possessing those corruptions of heart, which will, unless guarded against and resisted, bring affliction and sorrow to ourselves, and dishonor to Christ: Therefore let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.

8. We perceive that this scene of glory, and this interview with glorified spirits were exceedingly delightful. Peter exclaims, It is good for us to be here: and then makes a very singular proposal—let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias; as if glorified spirits needed, or would accept tabernacles built on earth! For this strange purpose how-

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ever, the evangelist makes an apology, that Peter was so astonished and delighted that he wist not what he said. It is very evident that he wished the happy and glorious scene might be of long continuance. Nor is there any occasion to wonder at such a desire. Never was social worship, on earth, attended with such views and enjoyments. As they retired to this mountain, on purpose for prayer, their minds no doubt were in a solemn contemplative frame as they ascended. Soon after they had arrived at a convenient place on the mountain, the prayer of Christ began; even the prayer of him, who is the great Mediator betwixt God and man, and whom the Father always heareth. At the same time the fashion of his countenance was altered, his face did shine as the sun; his raiment became white as the snow,—glistering even as the light. His robes were the robes of glory; and from his divine countenance, in every direction, issued streams of light. But Peter and they that were with him, did not see the beginning of this glorious vision, nor hear the whole of this wonderful and edifying discourse; but being wearied by the labors of the day before, they were quite overburdened, and sunk down with sleep; but being awakened by the brightness of those rays, which pierced the darkness of the night, they saw to their inexpressible astonishment, his unusual glory, and the two men, who were standing with him, and heard the conclusion of their discourse, whence they collected who they were. It is to be noticed, not only that Christ himself was transfigured, and made the most astonishing and divine appearance; but that these eminent saints *appeared in glory*, i. e. with a dignity and splendor becoming their character, and suitable to the bright and glorious regions whence they came. Well might the disciples have exclaimed, like Jacob: How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven! Here was Moses, the great law-giver of the Jews, and type of Christ; here was Elijah, that bold and persecuted prophet of the Lord, both of whom had for many ages been reaping, in celestial fields, the rich harvest of all their earthly toils. Here was the blessed

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Jesus, not in the humble form, which he usually wore in the days of his humiliation; but with illuminated countenance and shining vesture, such as he was about to assume after his ascension to God's right hand.

In addition to all this, they find themselves suddenly invested with a cloud, and hear a voice issuing from the cloud, and saying, in regard to Christ: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

We conclude the present discourse with some reflections on the glories of heaven, of which this scene of the transfiguration was only a shadow. In heaven, there will be not only Moses and Elias, but all the saints of every age. All the patriarchs, who served as lights in the midst of a benighted world; all the prophets, whom God inspired to foreshow his designs of grace to men; all the apostles of Christ, and witnesses of his gospel, who "loved not their lives unto death." There shall be a Noah, Abraham and Joshua, an Isaiah and Daniel; a St. Paul and all his fellow helpers to the kingdom of God: I beheld, said the holy seer of Patmos, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation unto our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. All this innumerable multitude of sanctified ones shall appear gloriously arrayed in white garments, enjoying the most blissful and honorable intercourse with angels. Jesus Christ shall there appear in full majesty: not only in that glory, which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, but with that additional splendor and elevation, which he acquired, by accomplishing the work of man's redemption. He will then sit on the "right hand of power, far above all principality, and might, and dominion, and every name, that is named; all things being put under his feet. The worshippers shall no more feel bodily fatigue, like these disciples, who fell asleep, even when their Lord was praying. The worship of heaven shall be rational, vigor-

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ous, and fervent. No one will feel indifferent, or languid; but each will join in it, with his whole heart. Peter, to prolong the splendid and happy scene, which he enjoyed on the mount with Christ, proposed to build three tabernacles. The saints, in much greater happiness, shall be assured of its perpetuity:—they will have no fears, that their pleasures will ever cease, or be diminished. Those rivers of pleasure, which flow at God's right hand, continue forever more: The tabernacles of God shall be with men:—God himself shall be among them. Eternity will not exhaust his love to them, nor their satisfaction and delight in him. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things, which God has prepared for them that love him. God grant we may experience, throughout eternity, the inadequacy of all our present conceptions.

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SERMON II.

CHRIST'S UNIVERSAL REIGN.

Cor. 15: 25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Our blessed Saviour, both in the Old and New Testament, sustains the character of a king. I have set my king, saith God by the psalmist, on mine holy hill of Zion. Isaiah speaks in this language: Behold a king shall reign in righteousness. Jeremiah, in like manner: Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. By the prophet Daniel, it was foretold, that the God of heaven should set up a kingdom.

The kingdom of Messiah is spoken of, as preeminent. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever.

Agreeably to all these declarations, when our Saviour appeared in the flesh, it was in character of a king; he came to establish a kingdom. This was even rumored about to his disadvantage, as if his design had been to overthrow the civil government. When Pilate, under the influence of this gross misconception, asked Jesus, if he were a king, Jesus answered, It is, as thou sayest. I am a king; but my kingdom is not of this world; but for this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

The Gospel dispensation is denominated "the kingdom of

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God." The law and the prophets, saith Christ, were until John; from that time the kingdom of God is preached, etc., the Gospel is made known. The administration of this kingdom will continue in the hands of Christ, until the great designs of infinite wisdom are accomplished; at which time, it will revert back to its original source, even to God the Father. By this authority committed to Christ, the most important objects are to be effected. The reign of Christ is not a slothful, ineffectual, and inglorious reign. He must reign, saith the Apostle, till he has put down all rule, all authority, and power; he must reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet; and then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom unto God; and the Son himself shall be subject unto him, that God may be all in all. The time, when all shall be subject to Christ, will, it appears, be immediately after the general resurrection.

We will now endeavor to show what is meant by that universal subjection to Christ, foretold in the text; and in what sense it can be said, that all things shall be put under him.

The expression "all things," must be so understood as to designate rational beings only. Inanimate objects, such as the earth, the ocean, the sky, the winds and clouds, can never act in opposition to his will. They manifest his glory, but never counteract his designs. Fire and hail, snow and vapor, and stormy winds all unite in fulfilling his word. The irrational animals, as they are incapable of knowing God's will, must be, for that reason, incapable of opposing it. Besides, it is supposed, that the material heavens and earth and all the inhabitants of the earth, air and sea, man only excepted, will be consumed before that august period, of which we are speaking.

It follows then, that rational beings, such as men and angels, are exclusively meant, by the "all things," which shall be made subject to Christ.

But in what sense, it may be asked, will the whole human race, and apostate spirits ever be put in such subjection?

I answer, that this can never be said of all, in the same sense. Part of the human race will be reduced to a willing subjection.

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Through the power of God's word and Spirit, they will be brought to love the kingdom of Christ, and cordially submit to his laws. All sin, whether concealed in the heart, or displayed in the life, is a species of warfare, is enmity against God. The heart, full of sensuality, is not and cannot be conformed to the law of God: for whenever it yields to God, it then becomes a new heart, ceases to be prevailingly sensual, and to remain under the reigning power of sin. It is the joy and happiness of a believer's heart, that the Lord sits, as king over all the earth! that he will assuredly influence, restrain, or regulate all his creatures in whatever part of the universe, in such a manner, as is most consistent with infinite wisdom, justice and mercy.

The Christian in the exercise of the temper, which renders him such, earnestly desires, that the Lord may reign forever, and has no inclination to alter the course of his most perfect government. The laws of Christ appear to him absolutely perfect; and it is the deliberate determination of his heart to give up himself, to be ruled by them. When a sinner turns to God, he feels and acknowledges, that he has need of Christ; and that the Gospel, which he has opposed by his disobedience and unbelief, is the only religion which can be satisfactory to an awakened conscience. In this view of the matter, he yields himself to Christ, and the word of his grace, being willing to receive salvation on any conditions, which the Gospel makes known, and to acknowledge himself, as lying entirely at the mercy of God. To use the psalmist's prophetic language, he falls under, and submits himself to Christ, as his conqueror and king. In this way, by a voluntary surrender, will many of Christ's enemies be put under his feet. And all who thus submit, and become obedient subjects, he will exalt to great honor. He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

It is indeed, a sorrowful reflection, that so small a proportion of mankind give any proof of being brought to these terms. It is melancholy to believe, that so large a part of our degenerate race perseveringly rebel against the Prince of Peace. It is not charity, but inattention to the terms of salvation, as they are re-

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vealed in Scripture, which leads men to think favorably of the spiritual state of the world in general. We have no reason to doubt that the words of Christ, in which he described the state of mankind in his day, are in the highest sense applicable to them at present: Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. Yet we know not, that this state of the moral world is to continue unto the end. There seems much reason to believe, that a day will come before the final consummation of all things, when truth, peace, and righteousness will mightily prevail,—when the Spirit of God shall be unusually poured out from on high: When the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills. According to his word, we look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. And perhaps the uncommon exertions which are now making in the various parts of the Christian world, for the propagation of Christianity among the heathen, and among others who are not in a condition to enjoy the established means of grace, may be the instrument of bringing on better days, and of extending the kingdom of Christ. Many may thus be reduced in holy subjection to him, and be brought to serve him, in obedience, all the days of their lives.

But we are not allowed to entertain the comfortable hope, that all are to be reduced in this way: Christ must indeed reign, till he has put all enemies under his feet. All will not however be brought to a willing obedience,—many will remain enemies still. In what sense, can it be said of these, that Christ shall reduce them under his feet? I answer, they will be made to experience that punishment which God's justice has prepared for them who reject his grace. The king will then say: As for these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me. However opposed they are to the government and person of Christ, they will then feel his irresistible power; perceive that all their

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impious hostilities is ineffectual, and that no one ever hardened himself against God and prospered.

If a whole nation had risen up against the lawful authority of their king, and he by foreign aid had conquered, confined, and disarmed all those who continued unreconciled, there would be the greatest propriety in saying, that he had reduced his subjects.

In like manner those of mankind who die in their sins, though they retain the same perverseness of heart, and the same unwillingness to submit to the commands of Christ, as formerly, will experience the weight of his arm, extended for their punishment. They are now permitted to mix with the rest of men, without bearing any marks of the divine displeasure. "The favor which God beareth unto his chosen," is not made manifest, in this life, by the good things, which he bestows on them, but denies to his enemies. And, although God is abundantly able to consume his enemies, in a moment, he bears with them, even when in the most flagrant manner, they violate his laws. They are not put under his feet, either by being brought to a holy and willing obedience, or being made the objects, on which the divine wrath is displayed. But after the resurrection and the decision of the last day, it shall be seen how entirely the enemies of God are within his power. It will be seen that the end of the wicked is, that they should be cut off forever.

Besides; sinners do in this world, not only themselves neglect the religion, and counteract the laws of Christ, but are instrumental of leading others into the same disobedience: They strengthen the hands of the wicked, and encourage the ungodly, in an evil way. But after the resurrection, when they are confined in that prison, which is prepared for the devil and his angels, and where they shall serve as monuments of God's mighty indignation, they will have no opportunity, of encouraging others to oppose the dominion of Christ. They will be in company with none, but such as are already irrecoverably corrupted. As they have formerly been the instruments of perverting some, and hardening others, their future punishment will be such, as

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to display, in a very awful manner, God's abhorrence of sin, and may thereby be the means of good to any other beings in the universe, still remaining in a probationary state.

It may be asked, perhaps, whether the wicked are not as completely put under the feet of Christ, at death, as they will be at the resurrection? I answer, they are not, for two reasons; 1. They are not so universally conquered at that time. Although some of the enemies of Christ are continually falling before him, yet as there is an amazing host still remaining,—still continuing on the earth, it cannot, with much propriety, be said, that all things are put under his feet. 2. Another reason, why it cannot be said, in the most perfect sense, of the wicked, that they are put under the feet of Christ, before the resurrection, is, that although they begin to experience their punishment at death, it will not be dealt out to the full, until the resurrection. They are now, to use St. Peter's language, under chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment. Their punishment, we have reason to suppose, is not only less severe, but less conspicuous, less evident to the universe, than it will be, when the judgment is passed. The whole universe will then be called to witness the righteous sentence of the Almighty. All beings will be called together, to notice the complete victory of Christ, over his enemies, and the fury which he will render to his adversaries.

But not only sinners of the human race, but devils also, shall, after the resurrection, experience more fully, the power of Christ. The words which we have used from St. Peter: Reserved under chains of darkness, to the judgment of the great day, were originally applied to them. The devils are now, in some sense, let loose upon the world. We have reason to think that infernal influence is continually exerted. Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, saith the Apostle, seeking whom he may devour. It is true, indeed, that he is under the control of God, yet we know, that his exertions are extensive, and his success lamentably great. The human heart in its state of degeneracy, is but too ready to com-

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ply with the enemy's temptations. And what a large proportion of mankind choose rather to be subjects of the prince of darkness, than of the Prince of light and peace! But it shall not be so forever. Christ will reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And if the seventy disciples could say, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name; much more shall these infernal agents be disarmed and confined, at the day of judgment. They shall no more deceive the nations. They shall be cast into that dreary prison, which was, in a peculiar sense, prepared for them. They will suffer the effects of divine wrath, without ever enjoying the malicious pleasure of making any further addition to the number of those wretched beings, whom their wiles have ruined. Thus will the great Redeemer reign, till he has put down all rule, authority, and power. The Lord said unto my lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies, thy footstool. The power of Christ will be extolled in heaven above, and acknowledged in hell beneath. In the regions above, shall be the whole assembly of sanctified ones, who have voluntarily submitted to Christ, and chosen his government. In the regions below, will those be collected, who rejected this man from reigning over them, and who must therefore live, as the desperate objects of God's displeasure.

And, now there is one very obvious reflection, which presents itself to us, viz. that we ourselves must, in some way, be reduced to the footstool of Christ. He will reign; and we must in some sense be subject to his government. We must either be brought to render to him a willing obedience, or be crushed beneath the weight of his power. We may for a while rebel against the light, choose our own ways, and put divine wisdom far from us,—we may give no attention to all the remonstrances and invitations of Christ, but with great obstinacy reject his proposals of grace. Notwithstanding this, all the enemies of Christ, and we, if we continue of that number, must fall before him.

Never was a warfare so desperate, as that which sinners

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maintain against the laws and empire of Christ. There is no possible chance of its terminating in their success. They know that they must yield at last. There is no comparison,—there is no proportion between the feebleness of man, and that mighty power, by which all things were created: and yet all things were made by Christ; he possesses this power, and every persevering sinner, must feel the weight of it. Besides all this, the longer, and more obstinately the combat is maintained, the more signal and striking will be the victory of Christ over his enemies. According to their haughtiness, obstinacy, and perseverance, will be the dishonor, degradation, and ruin to be heaped upon them. Whatever be the rank and quality of sinners, it will be of no consideration in this view. However great may have been their talents, and extensive their influence; —how illustrious soever they may have been, in the eyes of the world, it will make no difference. The greatest, the wisest, and most powerful sinner in the world, is as easily brought into shame and everlasting contempt, as the poorest beggar, that ever lived on charity. Whatever be your station, influence, or character, Christ will, in some way, rule over you. If you do not consent that he should reign in your hearts, he will rule you with a rod of iron, and dash you in pieces like a potter's vessel.

But opposition to Christ is not more dangerous, than it is unreasonable. Why should we not submit to that King, whom God has placed on his holy hill of Zion? What do we find in his commands and requirements, which is not perfectly wise and reasonable? Is it not rational that we should love a perfect being? a being infinitely good, infinitely wise, and holy? Is it not certain that all the laws, enacted by such a being, ought to be obeyed? Surely the Creator has a right to the services of his creatures. It is right that we should take pleaure in praying to God and giving thanks to him, in communing with him, and in considering his character and government; and it is equally right that we should submit to God, and say from our hearts: Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. It is not God's

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ways, but ours, that are unequal. The whole disagreement has not arisen from any thing wrong, on the part of God;—the guilt is entirely our own; we are the criminal party.

And as to the condition of pardon revealed by Christ, in the Gospel; after all which has been done and suffered by him, that the aggravated crimes of rebellious men might be forgiven, can it be thought unreasonable, that we should be required to exercise humility, to confess our want of pardoning grace,—repent of sins which are past, and give ourselves up in future to the divine will?

Again: Why should we dread the empire of Christ? Why should we look with abhorrence on that state of the heart, which he requires? Do we well in calling the proud happy? Does the heart feel solid pleasure, in lifting itself up against God? Is there lasting comfort and peace of mind in the breast of him who is too proud to submit to the Gospel and to supplicate mercy through a crucified Saviour? So far from this, there is no created being, in the universe, who can be happy without humility. The Christian finds no moments so happy as those in which he feels most inclined to exalt God, and abase himself; to forget himself, and fix his eyes on the unspotted purity of his Maker. It is delightful; it is a kind of spiritual luxury, to prostrate himself, overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness, before the great and holy Governor of the universe. It must necessarily be a very fearful and distressing consideration, to be at enmity with him, in whose power we are, and on whom depends our destiny forever. For the same reason, there must be unspeakable comfort and solid joy in a total surrender of the heart to this infinitely glorious being; and in a conscious willingness to obey his laws, and submit to his empire.

It is the delight of glorified saints, and the joy of angels, to shrink, and as it were diminish themselves before the unspeakable majesty of God.

But, my hearers, if we desire to partake in this happiness, our submission to Christ must begin here on earth; the kingdom of Christ must be now established in our hearts. He who

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dies with an unsubdued, rebellious heart, will never, throughout eternity, submit to God. That heart will be self-tormented; it will feel the immortal worm, and the fire unquenchable. Behold his soul, that is lifted up, is not right within him. We must be humbled, and despairing of help within ourselves; we must embrace that mercy, which the Gospel holds forth. We must submit to the righteousness of faith; receive Christ as our atoning High Priest, as our Instructor and King. If we would not be put under his feet in anger, and be trampled in his fury, we must now lay hold on his strength, while his sceptre of grace is extended towards us. There is no safety in this rebellion, for a single day. It cannot be maintained, but at the peril and hazard of the soul. Every thing is wrong,—every thing is in danger while we are enemies to God, by wicked works. May God subdue our hearts by his grace, that we may delight in the empire of Christ, and be, through eternity, the monuments of his goodness.

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SERMON III.

IMPENITENT SINNERS WITHOUT EXCUSE AT THE GREAT DAY.

Job 31 : 14.—What then shall I do, when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer?

Job made this interrogation in connexion with a solemn disavowal of the crime of haughtiness and oppression. If I despised the cause of my man-servant or my maid-servant; what then shall I do, when God riseth up, etc., as if he had said: What shall I do at that awful crisis when God shall pass judgment on all my works? As God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and as we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, it becomes us to meditate on the transactions of that day, to consider how we shall order our cause, and with what arguments our mouths will be filled.

It is well known, that all who embrace those offers, which are made by Christ in the Gospel, do thereby obtain pardon and the promise of eternal life. Such persons, when God riseth up, will not shield themselves with their own innocence, but by the sufferings of Christ. They are found, as the apostle speaks, not having on their own righteousness, i. e. not relying on their own obedience to the law, as the meritorious ground of their justification; but having on that righteousness, which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;—interested in the covenant, which declares the believer justified from all those things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. Persons of this character, and in such a state, will never be confounded. They will lift up

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their heads with joy, when the Judge shall assemble all nations before his throne.

But no one will pretend, that all are in this state;—no one, judging on the principles of the Gospel, can suppose that the obedient followers of the Lamb, bear a great proportion to the whole. Though no man knoweth the number of God's children, have we not reason, even now, to form this melancholy conclusion, that Christ's disciples are a little flock, and that the servants of sin are far more numerous?

To persons of this latter description, the following discourse will be addressed; the object of which is to inquire, what answer can be given at the great day, by impenitent sinners;—what excuse they will then be able to offer, in their own behalf.

1. Will you answer, that you knew not the being and perfections of God;—that you knew not, that there was any supreme Being, who created yourselves, the world, and the universe? No person, who arrives at years of understanding, can make such a plea. No one can open his eyes, without seeing a crowd of witnesses to the existence of God. Did the heavens and earth create themselves? Did the mighty ocean gather itself together into the deep places of the earth? Did the shores of the ocean form themselves into a barrier against its overflowing? Does the tide rise up, and withdraw, every day, self-moved, or by its own choice? Is it by chance, that the seasons have an orderly return,—the fruits grow in one part of the year, and decay in another? Did you create your own bodies or your own souls? Or is it by chance, that you have eyes to see, ears to hear, feet to walk, or lungs to breathe? You know the contrary. You clearly perceive, not only that the heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament showeth his handy work, but that you yourself are fearfully and wonderfully made; and that you must have been created by some intelligent being, who had a design in creating you.

Can you pretend any uncertainty, as to the character of this being? Can you doubt his goodness? Do you not daily receive the fruits of it? Do you doubt his justice, or his holiness?

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Have you the least apprehension that he is unjust, or unholy? And will you dare to allege, in the last day, that unavoidable ignorance on these subjects excused your neglect of God; and that the reason, why you lived without God in the world, was, that you had no reason to believe that God existed?

2. But perhaps you will say, though you knew there was a God, and had no reason to doubt what his attributes were, yet you knew not what he required,—you were ignorant in what way, he was to be pleased, or displeased.—Why this is indeed strange. You knew that there was a holy God, and yet did not know that he required holiness in his creatures! You will not say this in his presence, when he riseth up, unless it be true. You will not dare to say, that you had doubts on this subject, if you had none. And now suffer me to ask any person present, whether he have any doubts on the general subject of what is pleasing or displeasing to God? Have you any doubt, that God requires you to entertain inward affection to himself; to submit to his holy will; to obey his commands; to rejoice in his government, and to desire his blissful presence? In neglecting obedience, prayer, and holy communion with God, or righteousness and charity to men, can you pretend it to be a matter of uncertainty, what God required? Can you ever assert that you know not whether it would be most agreeable to him, that you should repent of sin or persevere in it? Will you be able to tell him, that though, in the days of your probation, you saw some persons thoughtless, proud, selfish, haters of that which is good; and others meek, watchful against sin, sorrowful when they had committed it, devout, and obedient to the divine commands; you were still utterly unable to determine which of these characters was most pleasing in his sight; and whether, to obtain his blessing, you ought to imitate the one or the other? Will you dare to assert this before him, whose eyes are as a flame of fire?—But,

3. Though you cannot plead ignorance of what God requires, perhaps you intend to show, that his requirements were unreasonable. Can you support this charge better than your former

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plea of ignorance? Where is the unreasonableness of the divine commands? As God is perfect in all his attributes,—the most wise, just, pure and gracious being in the universe, is it a hard case, that man is required to love him accordingly? Would you have cause to think better of God, if he gave liberty to his creatures *not* to love him, or to love other objects in *preference* to him? Is it unreasonable, that he requires you to submit to him, with a humble, unrepining heart? Is it unjust, that he requires you to do good to his creatures, in obedience to his holy commands? Having broken these commands, do you complain, that he requires you to exercise repentance, to feel godly sorrow, to loathe yourself, and acknowledge his righteousness? Can any thing be more reasonable, than that an infinite God should demand of his creatures to live soberly, righteously, and piously in the present world? Look over the moral law given on mount Sinai; look over the whole Gospel, from beginning to end, and see if you can find a single command which ought not to be obeyed? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God? Ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal? Hear, O house of Israel: are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal.

4. Perhaps, you design to make this plea at your final trial, that though you had some knowledge of what the divine requirements were, you did not know in what manner they were sanctioned: i. e. you did not know whether God would reward the obedient, and punish the disobedient.—But this plea is inconsistent with itself. Can any person possibly believe that God requires his creatures to be holy, and forbids them to be sinful, and yet will never treat those who break his laws differently from those who have kept them? Can any one doubt, that those who trample on the authority and violate the laws of God, will experience the divine wrath? Can it be imagined, that a Being, who hates sin and loves holiness, will never make known his hatred of the one, and his complacency in the other?

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Besides, almost every page in Scripture, speaks on the subject in the clearest manner. It not only shows what God requires and what he forbids; it shows likewise the rewards of obedience and the punishment of rebellion: Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the rewards of his hands shall be given him. Though the sinner do evil an hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with him that feareth God, —that feareth continually before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow. Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish unto every soul of man that worketh evil, but glory, honor and peace to him that worketh good.

While the Bible, which you may peruse daily, contains a multitude of such declarations as these, will you dare, when God riseth up, to plead your ignorance of the rewards of holiness and the punishments of sin?

5. Will you defend yourself by saying, that you had determined to change your heart and life, at some future period; but were called away before your designs were executed? In that case may it not be asked, who gave you liberty to defer conversion? The divine word most assuredly did not: The declarations of that word are to this effect: Now is an accepted time: behold now is a day of salvation. To-day,—after so long a time as to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts: but boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Will you plead that you had no warning of your departure, when you scarcely lived a month without witnessing some new triumph of the king of terrors? What will it avail to say, that you intended to repent at some future season, when that very resolution implied an intention of remaining impenitent, till that period should arrive? Can you suppose that God is bound to wait your leisure, though religion be deferred from year to year, and one resolution is broken after

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another? Is this a subject which you will dare to mention, when God riseth up?

6. The general slothfulness will, perhaps you imagine, give you some confidence, and supply you with an answer, at the great day. The course you pursue is not peculiar to yourself. You are not distinguished by any flagrant, enormous crimes. That disregard to God, Christ, and his Gospel, which may be alleged against you at the day of judgment is no more than what is exhibited by a majority of your acquaintance. But if you may plead their example, they may plead yours—if the plea is good in one case, it will be good in another. Can it be imagined, that the Son of man sitting on the throne of his glory, with all the holy angels with him, will be so terrified by the multitude of culprits, as to absolve those who are condemned by a constitution, which himself has formed? Is it an unexpected event, do you apprehend, that multitudes travel the broad road, and enter at the wide gate, which leadeth to destruction? Did not the divine author of the Gospel-constitution know the little success, which would attend it? and the number of those, who would reject it? Will numbers frighten Him, before whose face the earth and the heavens shall flee away;—in whose presence, the wicked shall be as the giving up of the ghost: at a time when all tribes of the earth shall mourn and smite their breasts; when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, as well as every bond man and every free man shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains, and say to the mountains and the rocks, Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb?

At such a season, and in the midst of these direful scenes, will you be inclined to attempt an excuse, by saying that in the doing of evil, you only followed a multitude? The doom of other sinners will be so evident, that no one will be desirous of proving his resemblance to them.

7. There is another plea, which it is believed, that many

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design to set up, when their trial comes on: I mean that of having done as much good as evil.

Your design is to make it appear, that though you have done much evil, you have likewise done much good,—that though you have broken the laws of God, in many instances, you have likewise fulfilled them in many. To this we make a twofold reply: 1. Were that which you affirm, true, it would by no means, be of itself, a ground of safety? 2. It is not true.

1. Suppose it were true, that you had obeyed God's holy law in as many instances as you have broken it, this would not be a plea, on which to depend, at the day of judgment. Is not the law of God holy in one part as well as another? Was one part of it made to be obeyed and the other to be broken? Did ever God say, If you will serve me half the time, you may sin the other half? Does not the divine law denounce a curse on those who continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them? Is not this the case with all laws, whether human or divine? Would any criminal, before an earthly tribunal, dare to plead, in his own defence, that, though guilty of the crime alleged, he has lived honestly, as many days as dishonestly; and that, if his promises and oaths have been false, half the time, they have been true the other half? Such a plea as this was never set up, in a human court, and can you suppose it will answer in the court of Heaven? God requires obedience in all instances, as well as in any. Even if you had obeyed the laws of God nine times out of ten, you would not obtain a legal justification. No person can be justified by the law, who has not kept the law perfectly. If you had sinned against God but in one instance, you would need to be justified freely by divine grace, through the redemption there is in Christ; and, therefore, without an interest in Christ, you must forever remain under condemnation.—But,

2. It is far from being true, that you have obeyed the law of God as frequently as you have disobeyed it. Consider what the divine law requires. It is not outward obedience only. It is the obedience of the heart, which God demands. He forbids

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every evil purpose and desire, and the indulgence of every evil imagination. Impenitent sinners, no doubt, do many things externally which the law of God requires; but there is always an essential deficiency:—there is always wanting that right state of the heart,—that love towards God, which is more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices. God requires that we love him with all the heart, soul, mind and strength:—that we delight in his character and government, and cordially choose him as our eternal portion. This, the unrenewed sinner does not. What then is his dependence? What is the ground on which his justification rests? Is it a partial obedience; and that not of the heart, but wholly outward? Will an obedience essentially defective, counterbalance his pride, ingratitude, stubbornness, and rebellion of heart.

It is very usually forgotten by persons who set up such a plea that the great Judge of all the earth is the Searcher of hearts:—they are apt to imagine, that the laws of God, like those of civil society, take cognizance of outward actions alone. If you are convinced, that all the feelings and exercises of heart will be subjects of examination at the last day,—that the secrets of all hearts will be laid open; and that the law of God casts down every imagination and every high thing that exalteth itself against God, you will not,—you cannot pretend, that your obedience equals your disobedience: much less will you dare to place your eternal salvation or destruction on such an issue. Will such a calculation be satisfactory at death? Will the hopes of a dying man be supported on such ground? To this question, none can positively answer. Perhaps those who trust in a refuge of lies while living, may have the same trust even in death. Perhaps their false hope may continue till the last: but surely it will not remain in the day of judgment: Their hope will then be as the spider's web, or like the chaff which the wind driveth away. The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. The divine law will then be magnified and made honorable. None who have broken it, will be acquitted on any other foun-

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dation than Gospel-grace. None of the partakers of Gospel-salvation will attribute their happiness to their own good deserving, but to him that loved them, and washed them from their sins, in his own blood.

We can think of but one more objection, but that is, perhaps, more plausible than any hitherto mentioned. I mean the native depravity of man. Of you, who have a sinful heart, you think it unreasonable that God should require holy obedience.

This subject, no doubt, is attended with real difficulties;—perhaps it cannot, in our state of ignorance, be wholly understood; yet enough, we believe, can be said, to show that no sinner can with safety rest his defence on this ground, in the day of judgment. The disordered animal constitution, which is transmitted from Adam to all his posterity, does not necessitate sin, though it is, in fact, followed by voluntary transgression and consequent inward corruption. It is sin, voluntary sin alone, which exposes to the wrath of God.

But what kind of persons are they, who can expect to excuse themselves, in the day of judgment, by pleading their native corruption. Certainly not they who disbelieve the doctrine. That were the greatest absurdity imaginable. You do not assuredly design to excuse impenitence, when God riseth up, by alleging that which you do not believe. But if you *do* believe it, as we humbly conceive the Scriptures clearly teach it, are the sins committed in common life, excused on this ground? Do you suppose, that a thief, who has stolen your goods, or an incendiary, who has burned your house, is excusable on account of his native corruption? If you do not grant that others are excusable on this ground, how can you use it in your own defence? Can you suppose that an apology, which has little or no weight in the view of men, will avail in the estimation of him who searcheth the heart?

It thus appears, that the impenitent sinner will be able to make no valid defence, in the day of judgment. If it be easy now to show that his pleas are groundless, will he have the

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confidence to bring them forward, when God riseth up? Far otherwise: Every sinner will then be speechless; his mouth will be stopped; his guilt will evidently appear. The righteousness of God will break forth. The heavens shall declare his righteousness and all the people shall see his glory. God will be justified, when he speaketh and clear when he judgeth. He will certainly overcome in judgment;—it will evidently appear, that truth and reason are on his side.

The text contains two questions. The one, What shall I answer? we have considered. The other is, What shall I do when God riseth up? As we have shown that the sinner will be wholly unable to offer any good reason, why judgment should not be executed,—that he will be wholly confounded before his Judge, what will then remain to be done? what expedient can then be embraced? Inquiries of this nature will compose the ensuing discourse. "What shall I *do* when God riseth up?" To what being shall the sinner apply? Will he resort to those, who are impenitent like himself? to those, who appear before God in the same character? Doubtless it will be easy to *find* persons of this description,—multitudes who have travelled the broad way, and entered at the wide gate; but will they be in circumstances to afford any relief to a fellow reprobate, even if they were disposed? Will not they all be in the same confounded, despairing state? Will not they all be overwhelmed with the dismal prospect of that eternity which is before them? Will not all compassion and tenderness, something of which seems natural to man, be then overborne by despair and confirmed rebellion? Can one condemned culprit give security from almighty displeasure, to those who are under the same condemnation? Sinners do, in this world, strengthen the hands of each other. By combining, they often screen each other from earthly punishment. Not so, when God visiteth. It will be then seen, though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not prosper.

But 2. Will you obtain relief, by making application to the children of God? Call now, if there be any to answer; and to

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which of the saints wilt thou turn? No doubt they will entertain dispositions highly benevolent, and will be ready to give any assistance, that is not contrary to the orders and purposes of him, whom they supremely love. Before their state of trial had closed, they would have rejoiced exceedingly, if sinners had desired their prayers, instructions, and good offices. But at the great day, the case will be quite different. The saints will then have no authority to speak of pardon and salvation. The opportunity is past; the door is shut. The only way, in which any among the fallen posterity of Adam can obtain pardon and everlasting life, is faith in Jesus Christ, comprehending repentance and hearty submission. Having complied with these conditions, the children of God will appear in the righteousness of Christ, at the great day. But the season of grace, —the season in which pardon can be obtained on these conditions, closes at death. After that, salvation is not to be offered on *any* conditions whatever. If the foolish virgins should say to the wise: Give us of your oil; the latter would reply: Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you. Our acceptance of Christ gives security to *ourselves;* but can afford no security to any *other*.

The children of God cannot derange the divine constitution and offer life to those, concerning whom God hath said: Let him that is unjust, be unjust still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still.

To any application, made at that time, they must answer as the king of Israel did to a woman, who at the siege of Samaria, cried out, saying: Help, O King!—If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? Should you be so unhappy, as to appear at the divine bar, in any other garb than the righteousness of Christ, all application to your fellow men, whether saints or sinners, will be altogether ineffectual. It will then be found, that vain is the help of man.

There will be an eternal separation between the righteous and the wicked, even though they were once united in the same town, neighborhood or family. Pious Eli will not be able to

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save his profane sons; nor will devout David rescue the profligate Absalom.

3. What then will you do, when God visiteth? If you cannot turn to any of the human race, with a prospect of relief, will you resort to the holy angels? These beings are, indeed, more powerful than human creatures, and can, in many instances, do what the latter cannot. But as the power of God is infinite, *their* power bears no more proportion to that than human power does. They can no more rescue one condemned sinner from punishment, than the feeblest among our own race. Nor will they be disposed to do it. The angels do, at present, indeed, take great interest in the concerns of men. They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. They were, in former ages, desirous to look into the mystery of redemption, and there is joy among them, over every sinner that repenteth. But it is not to be conceived, that they would rejoice, that a sinner should be saved without repentance, if the thing were in itself possible; nor would they intercede with God, that the offers of grace might be made to a sinner, at the day of judgment, knowing, as they must, that his day of grace is then over. How absurd is the thought, that the angels, who delight to do God's will, and are always convinced of the wisdom and holiness of all the divine proceedings, should attempt the rescue of those, whom God condemns! But, besides, you well know, there are but two apartments in the invisible world; one for the righteous and one for the wicked. Were it possible, then, that the angels should rescue you from hell, how would you be disposed of? Could they introduce you into heaven? Would such an interposition be desirable to you? Would you then desire the very things which now you do not desire? Would you desire the company of angels, and such beings as angels are? Would you desire to be eternally united to such beings as are forever engaged in the sublime duties of holiness, though you now, at the known hazard of the soul, reject all exhortations to holiness? Could the angels bring you to heaven, not only against the *will of God*, but also against *your own*, and make you happy in the enjoyment of that for

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which you have no relish? Most assuredly all application to them will be vain, in the day when God visiteth. These holy beings will accompany the Son of Man, when he shall appear in flaming fire to take vengeance; and they will as truly approve of the divine proceedings in the condemnation of those who reject the Gospel, as they rejoice in the wisdom of the scheme of mercy, which the Gospel unfolds.

4. Perhaps you design to resort to *Christ*, at the last day;—you mean to make some passionate appeal to his mercy; you mean then to acknowledge, that there can be no salvation but through him, and that you are forever undone, if he refuse you. As he is a compassionate Saviour, you suppose he will show his compassion to all applicants, even to such, who resort to him for the first time, at the day of judgment. Christ is, indeed, compassionate; the whole Gospel shows him to be such; and many souls ready to perish, have felt his compassion. Humbly resort to him, at present, acknowledging the insufficiency of every other help, and placing yourself wholly at his mercy, there will be hope of finding acceptance. *Now* is an accepted time; now is a day of salvation. But where is the least evidence, that the compassion of Christ will be exercised to those who reject the offers of salvation, till death? Where do you find mention of any, who at the day of judgment, shall repent and be received into the covenant of grace? Indeed our Saviour himself has shown us, that some sinners shall apply to him at that time, but shall be repulsed. Many shall say: Lord, Lord, open to us; have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence; and in thy name cast out devils; and in thy name done many wonderful works; and he will say, I never knew you, depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Here, you see, is an application made to Christ, and rejected by him. All applications made to him, at the last day, will be as ill received. Those, who have not known Christ, before death, will not be known of him at the day of judgment. Christ will, at that day, assume an aspect very different from that which he now wears. He now reasons with sinners, and gives them the most liberal

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and gracious invitations. He now exclaims, as he once did, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. But this will not be his language to those who shall hereafter be found impenitent. Exhortations and offers will be wholly at an end. Christ will then appear to judge those by law, who have rejected mercy: Then shall they call upon him, but he will not answer; they shall seek him earnestly, but shall not find him; for they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of his counsel, but despised all his reproof; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices. He shall say: As for these mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.

What expedient will still remain to the sinner? Is there any other being from whom he can seek relief? Doubtless there is, even God the Father: but what prospect of success can there be, in this application? God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten and dearly beloved Son, that whosoever believeth on him, might not perish; but he did not send his Son to save those who should reject him. When the owner of the vineyard sent his son to the husbandmen to receive the fruits, he said: They will reverence my son, when they see him. But, when the son was refused and ill treated, the father was highly and justly incensed. So will the God and Father of our Lord Jesus be indignant towards all who slight the offers of grace, which his Son has made. Can it be conceived, that the great Jehovah should devise such measures for the salvation of apostate creatures,—that he should commission the blessed Messiah for this purpose, and yet save such as reject the Messiah? Should recourse be had to the Father at the day of judgment, will he not remind the sinner, of seasons, means and privileges, that are past? Will he not say, "You once had life given you for the very purpose of forming a friendship with your Maker? You knew, that the day of final decision was approaching. Though your sins were many, you had the tender of salvation.

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A full atonement was made by him, who offered up his life for sinners. My word was in your hands, plainly setting forth the dreadful consequences of final impenitence, and urging you, in the most persuasive and gracious manner, to turn and live. My Spirit was sent to persuade you to make the same wise and happy choice. The language of both was: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die? I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. Return unto your strong holds, ye prisoners of hope. The Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him who is athirst come, and take the waters of life freely. Awakening providences, such as imminent dangers and wonderful deliverances, were sent with the same gracious design. But all these, will God say to the impenitent, were in vain; your neck was an iron sinew, and your brow brass. You habitually resisted the Spirit of God; you would not have the Messiah to reign over you. You still persevered in sin, and never came to a hearty compliance with the conditions of the Gospel. And now the time of decision is come; your doom is irreversible. You must forever exist without comfort or hope, and feel that misery from which you refused to escape. You must depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Thus have we endeavored to show, that the sinner will be able to make no answer, when God riseth; that he will be able to do nothing, when God riseth up.

Perhaps, my hearers, you view this subject as too gloomy to be treated of. It is gloomy indeed. But if the thought of such a condition be distressing, should it not be our concern to avoid the condition itself? And that we may feel a due concern to avoid it, should we not consider what it is? Which of the circumstances which we have mentioned, ought to be suppressed? What improbability is there in the suppositions we have made? Is it impossible that you will ever appear before God in judgment? Does the state of religion among us forbid the belief, that many, very many are in an unpardoned state,—without any well grounded hope, and without God's fa-

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vor? And will not such persons, should they die without alteration of heart and character, be absolutely without excuse and without resource, at the day of judgment?

There is a very great difference between the present state of sinners, and their condition at the last day. It will then be desperate; it is now hopeful: God is willing to receive you into the covenant of grace, on the terms of godly sorrow and hearty submission. Life and death, the blessing and the curse are now proposed. The offers of eternal life are made with perfect sincerity, on the part of God. But, from the subject, it appears, that they will not be made forever. The impenitent sinner will soon be in a state, in which he can find no relief,—no rest,—but be obliged to sink down in sorrow.

How exceedingly different will then appear the condition of those, who are found in the righteousness of Christ! To such there will be no condemnation. Having embraced the evangelical scheme of salvation, their sins are frankly forgiven. They have indeed no legal claim to salvation, on the score of their good deserving, but they have a sure claim founded on the atonement of Christ. They have the unalterable friendship of their Judge, having fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them. They will doubtless have, at the great day, a deep sense of their obligations to divine grace. They will know, that without God's free mercy in Christ, they themselves could have nothing to answer,—no resource to which they could possibly repair? In the present life, the children of God may be viewed with contempt. Haughty and elevated sinners may treat them disdainfully. But hereafter, they and they only, of all the human race, will be honored.

If the condition of sinners will soon be desperate;—if the condition of God's children will soon be unspeakably glorious, how ought this consideration to affect us, who are now in our state of trial? What anxiety;—what concern can be disproportionate to such an object? What can justify our stupidity? What reason can be assigned, why creatures just entering on eternity, and soon to be made unalterably happy or miserable,

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should shrink from inquiring into their own spiritual concerns, —and shut their eyes against the object which it would be reasonable to suppose, would be always in their view? Will nothing but death convince us that we are mortal? Will nothing but the beginning of eternity convince us, that we are designed for eternity? Will nothing but the terrors of the last day convince us, that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ? It is not the religious,—it is not those who are deeply engaged in religion, who act the irrational part; but it is such as walk in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes, forgetful that for all these things, God will bring them into judgment;—those who quietly pass down the stream of iniquity, not considering, that this stream falls into the boundless ocean of despair. Such will be constrained, when too late, to say: We fools counted his life madness, and his end to be without honor: Now is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints!

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SERMON IV.

IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THE TRUTHS OF THE GOSPEL.

Acts 25: 17, 18, 19.—Therefore, when they had come hither, without any delay on the morrow, I sat on the judgment seat, and I commanded the man to be brought forth. Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed; but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

In such terms spake Festus to king Agrippa concerning Paul, and concerning the religion, which he taught. In his view, nothing could be less important, than the contention maintained with so much zeal by Paul and his Jewish persecutors. The question whether one Jesus were dead or alive, appeared to him to deserve the attention of a sensible man as little, as the crime alleged against the prisoner, deserved judicial cognizance, yet on this fact rests the truth of the Christian religion; and with it is connected not only that immense change, which this religion has produced in the civil world, but all the happy and glorious consequences, which have resulted to millions of those who in different ages and countries, "have known Christ and the power of his resurrection." Could this question have been determined in the negative, darkness had till this day covered the earth, and gross darkness the people; pagan superstition and crimes had been continued; and multitudes had died in their sins, who now join in the song of Moses and the Lamb.

In Festus's apprehension, it is probable, the Christian story carried great improbability on the face of it. But whether true or false, the affair appeared to him as wholly unimportant.

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His indifference evidently proceeded from his mistaken views of the subject. He considered Christianity, as principally, or entirely consisting in a belief, that Jesus rose from the dead. That he should have entertained this opinion, was indeed irrational; but, while possessing it, his indifference to the subject can excite little surprise. If considered, as an insulated fact, no unusual importance can be attached to our Lord's resurrection. But if the same Jesus taught a system of doctrines, or a system of morals, or both, the fact of his resurrection immediately becomes extremely interesting. It will in that case be evident, that he came agreeably to his own words, "as a witness, to bear witness to the truth." Now if the fact of our Saviour's resurrection acquires importance from the character which he sustained as instructor, the importance of ascertaining what his instructions were, is undeniable. To the illustration of this truth, our present attention will be directed. To prevent misconception, it may however be necessary to make some previous remarks:

1. No particular state of the understanding renders a man acceptable to God. No person is morally good because he assents to a given proposition; nor is there any one morally bad merely for the opposite reason. Truth may be so clearly represented, as to gain the assent even of the worst of men; it may be presented with so little evidence as to be doubted by the best. There can be no question, that the infernal spirit believes some truths, either doubted or rejected by persons on earth, who are far less criminal, or who are really virtuous.

2. We are not to suppose, that every discrepancy of opinion is the result of moral depravity. Some may arise from diversity of talents, information, advantages, or from the particular manner in which evidence is exhibited.

3. Nor do we assert, that every degree of error, which involves criminality, is inconsistent with the character of a man, mainly influenced by the love of truth. That moral depravity, some portion of which attends even good men in the present

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state, may manifest itself in criminal prejudices, as well as in a different manner.

Still, it is by no means a matter of indifference what opinions are entertained as to the doctrines of Christianity.

In proof of this I observe,

1. That just conceptions as to the works of God, and the relation which they have to each other, are known to influence human happiness, as this is promoted by particular arts and employments. The fact of our Creator's having given peculiar qualities to the magnet, has wonderfully facilitated commerce. A knowledge of the human body leads to suitable applications, when disorders invade it. Discoveries in chemistry are conducive to the same object. It is evident then, that human happiness is promoted, not only by a knowledge in general, that creation is from God, but likewise by a particular knowledge of the parts and properties of creation. But, if ignorance of God's works, or wrong ideas concerning them be unfavorable to the interests of man, it would be strange indeed, that ignorance or mistakes as to his word should be perfectly and universally harmless.

2. The importance of believing truth may be shown by referring to those prophetic messages, which were sent to the Jewish nation. When that nation believed those messages and was influenced by them, judgments were prevented or withdrawn. When those messages were not believed, calamities were sent and additional guilt was contracted. Disregard to the remonstrances and admonitions of the prophets, is frequently mentioned, and with great severity. It is mentioned to the honor of the Ninevites, that they believed the prophet. The consequence of their belief was a reformation of life, which was followed by the salvation of their country.

Suppose for a moment, that instead of humbly regarding the prophet's message, they had contented themselves with speaking of his character respectfully, and acknowledging that he acted under a divine commission. In that case would the object of his mission have been accomplished? On such condi-

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tions, would impending judgments have been averted? But were the communications made by Jonah to the Ninevites more important, than those which have been made to the world by Jesus Christ? If therefore it were a matter of consequence not only to recognize Jonah as a prophet, but to examine and understand his message; it must be at least as highly important not only to acknowledge Jesus, as Messiah, but to examine and believe his doctrines.

3. It is evident, from the conduct of the most intelligent among various Christian denominations, that none of them, whatever language they are pleased to use, do in fact consider it as of no consequence, what systems of religion men adopt. If it were, why should so much ingenuity, learning, and critical effort be employed for the establishment of one system, and the abolition of another?

If it be a matter of moment to know, not only that Jesus Christ was a divinely commissioned instructor, but what his instructions were, all this is perfectly consistent. On such ground, literature and talents are well employed in collating manuscripts and versions, in detecting interpolations, if any there have been, and in discovering the lines, which separate the heritage of divine truth from the regions of human invention. But if it be sufficient that Christ came in the quality of a teacher, and rose from the dead, without forming any definite opinion of the instructions which he gave, those labors which are encountered with a view to preserve and transmit the original text, can have nothing for their object, in any considerable degree, if at all more important than the studies of those, who are employed in giving us correct editions of the classics.

In one thing all denominations of believers unite. I mean, in professing themselves to be the friends and votaries of truth. So far as their declarations may be credited, they desire nothing so earnestly, as to know the divine will, expressed in the works and oracles of God. But why this devotion to truth; why this ardent pursuit of it, if it be a matter of little or no consequence what opinions are educed from the sacred volume?

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4. The very existence of a revelation proves, that, in the divine opinion, religious sentiments are important. Had they not been so, no communication from above had been made on the subject. The particular manner, in which the Christian revelation was made, speaks the same language still more clearly. God has been, so to speak, at great expense, in communicating this religion. His intentions of doing it were suggested to the first human pair. With reference to the same object, divine appearances were exhibited to favored individuals in subsequent ages. A people were rescued from vassalage by a series of judgments, sent on their oppressors. God himself became their leader, their guardian and legislator. Ejecting the former inhabitants of Canaan, in their country he established his own people: they were made the depositaries of divine truth. With their civil institutions a religious system was connected, which system was to remain in operation till the "seed should come, to whom the promise was made." The state of surrounding nations, and of those far distant, was divinely governed and influenced with special reference to the approaching kingdom of Christ. During that whole time, which elapsed before the advent of the Messiah, God is represented as ordering events in subserviency to his great purposes of redeeming mercy! Our Lord's arrival was announced by a company of heavenly hosts, proclaiming "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men." His death, which was accompanied by frightful prodigies, was followed by his triumphant resurrection and visible ascension.

Now, can it be reasonably thought an affair of indifference, what opinions we form of a religion, introduced with all this pomp and preparation? If the message had not been of a highly interesting kind, would the world have been put in agitation on its account?

Perhaps it will here be said, that no believer in Christianity denies the importance of that religion; the only thing denied is the importance of those differences, which exist among its various professors. I answer, if Christianity be a divine reli-

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gion, or if it be any religion, there are some things, which it does teach, and others which it does not. What these are, is the point, concerning which different denominations of believers are not agreed. If some Christians be right, others have for a long time been teaching, under the name of Christianity, a great number of false and absurd opinions. If the latter be right, there is a large portion of Christianity, which the former deny.

Let it be supposed for a moment, that Christianity consists of a very few doctrines, such as the resurrection of the dead and a future retribution. In that case, can the importance of their error be doubted, who have taught the doctrine of the atonement, of entire depravity, regeneration, etc? On the other hand, if those doctrines be indeed taught in the Scriptures, is it perfectly immaterial, that they are rejected? Christianity, if it be a whole, must consist of parts; but how the whole can remain the same, when parts are taken away, or additions made, is not easily conceived.

The value of truth in theology may be inferred from the opinions either of those who believe little, or of those who believe much. If the object of our Saviour's death were not to make atonement for sin, but only to confirm his instructions, it clearly follows, that his instructions were of great importance; and if I deny half of that which he taught, I so far frustrate the design of his death. If, on the other hand, I understand him to teach what he did not teach, and what is not true, I make use of his death, as testimony to that which is false.

Let us now adopt the supposition, that Christ acted not only in the quality of an instructor, divinely commissioned, but of a high priest, divinely appointed; that his sufferings are the medium through which sins are forgiven, and salvation bestowed. The value of this belief, if well founded, will scarcely be called in question. If the salvation of men has been purchased by the Son of God, the fact ought evidently to be known, as it strikingly displays the divine compassion, and the nature of moral evil. A person must possess great insensibility to deny, that this doctrine, if true, should influence human feelings. Besides, the

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advocates of Christ's atonement believe no less than others, that Christ came as an instructor in righteousness. Considered in this point of view, it cannot be judged immaterial with them, whether his instructions be received or rejected.

Again, we are often told that all differences among Christians relate to matters of mere speculation; by which, I suppose, is meant, that these disputed points have no relation to practice and moral feelings, or else, a relation that is very remote.

From the appearance of this remark, one would suppose, that the subjects of Christian debate had been very few; and those comparatively numerous, on which there had been universal agreement. But is this fact? Far otherwise. "Show me the question in religion or common morals," said Bishop Hurd, "about which, learned men have not disagreed; nay, show me a single text of Scripture though ever so plain, which the perverseness or ingenuity of interpreters has not drawn into different and even contrary meanings."

Now if this observation be just, and the truth of it in general will not be called in question, it will follow from the position assumed, not only that the whole of Scripture relates merely to matters of speculation; but that all questions in morality and religion are of this sort.

To ascertain whether all difference of opinion is entirely speculative, let us turn our attention to some of those tenets, which are or have been maintained by professors of Christianity. In the seventeenth century arose in Holland the sect of Hattemists. From the doctrine of necessity, which they believed, they denied the difference between moral good and evil; or that mankind were under any sort of obligation to correct their manners, to improve their minds, or to endeavor after a regular obedience to the divine laws. They believed that Christ had made no expiation for sin by his sufferings and death; but had only signified to us by his mediation, that there was nothing in us, that could offend the Deity.*

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. V. p. 484.

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The opinions of the Libertines, who appeared in Flanders in the sixteenth century, were not very different from those already mentioned. They were as follows; that the Deity is the sole operating cause in the mind of man, and the immediate author of all human actions; that the distinction which has been established between good and evil in human actions, is groundless; and that all who maintain a happy union of soul to the Supreme Being, are allowed to indulge, without exception and without constraint, their appetites and passions, as all their actions are then perfectly innocent.*

It will hardly be said, these were speculative or trifling errors.

Let us notice an opinion, not uncommon in our own age and country; I mean that which denies all punishment after death. Has this opinion no important influence on practice, on moral character, on the state of civil society, and on the eternal condition of men?

Again; If I believe that my sins deserve either no punishment or a light one; or if I suppose, that my ill deserts are counterbalanced or exceeded by good actions; I cannot consistently have the same feelings of humility and penitence as those are bound to have, who are persuaded, that all their deservings are on the side of misery, and whose hopes of acceptance rest on the atonement of him "who died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It is vain to deny, that there is a real, and an obvious difference in the moral tendency of these sentiments; and, if persons holding them, have the same good, or same bad state of heart, it is because on one side or other, feelings and sentiments are in opposition.

Further: If it can with propriety be said, that all difference between the various denominations of Christians, is merely speculative, it will hardly be denied on reflection, that the difference between professors of Christianity and certain others, who reject the Scriptures, is of the same kind. A learned writer,

* Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. IV. p. 431.

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in the seventeenth century, published against the Scriptures, and with a design to show the insufficiency of natural religion. The articles of his creed were those which follow, viz., "There is one supreme God; He is chiefly to be worshipped; piety and virtue are principal parts of his worship; we must repent of our sins, and if we do, God will pardon them; there are rewards for good men, and punishments for bad men in a future life."* Whether the difference between this system of natural religion and the opinions of some, who believe the resurrection of Christ, is nearly as great as the difference between the latter, and that theology, exhibited by the articles of the church of England, the church of Scotland, by the synod of Dort, and by a majority of the churches of America, is a question too plain to require an answer. Of course, if all differences among Christians are unimportant, that which subsists between Christians and certain of the better kind of infidels, is more obviously so.

There is one observation relating to the subject before us, which must not be passed without notice. It is, that nothing in religion can be important, which is not very clearly revealed; or concerning which great and good men have been divided. This remark is respectable both on account of the character of many by whom it is made, and the kind intention, with which it is sometimes repeated. So far, as it is just, it will not fail to appear so, when examined. That the guilt of rejecting truth, when other things are equal, is proportionate to the evidence accompanying truth, cannot be denied. Nor is it ever to be forgotten, that this evidence may, for reasons already mentioned, be far greater to one, than to another. Yet can we by no means conclude, that a doctrine is unimportant, because the evidence, on which it rests, is not so plenary and overbearing, as might be desired. Whatever the Son of God revealed, was once hid from the children of men. Will it be denied that he revealed some things of importance? Now, if some impor-

* Leland's view of deistical writers, Vol. I. Lect. I.

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tant truths were not revealed to the world, in any degree, until the coming of Christ, how can we certainly infer, that they were made known with the greatest possible clearness, at the time of his coming? If it were consistent with his goodness not to reveal them for many ages, it cannot be inconsistent with the same goodness to do it with a greater or less degree of perspicuity. "We cannot," says Bishop Butler, "argue, that this cannot be the sense or intent of such a passage of Scripture, for if it had, it would have been expressed more plainly, or have been represented under a more apt figure or hieroglyphic —for this reason, that in Scripture, we are not competent judges, as we are in common books, how plainly it were to have been expected, what is the true sense that should have been expressed, or under how apt an image figured. The only question is what appearance there is that this is the sense? and scarce at all, how much more determinately or accurately it might have been expressed or figured?"*

We are now to make a few remarks on the latter part of the observation; viz. that no sentiment in religion can be of much importance, concerning which great and good men are divided.

That *great* men have erred on subjects of high moment, cannot be doubted without denying that title to Hobbes, Hume and Gibbon. If the matter be less obvious with regard to *good* men, this very want of certainty would tend much to injure the *value* of the remark, if true. Men are not always, in reality, what their external deportment would seem to indicate. Suppose now, that you have, by a careful and devout perusal of Scripture, adopted a number of sentiments which appear to you, not only to be taught in Scripture, but to occupy a very important place among the instructions, which are there given. These you consider as constituting that hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew. At this time, you become acquainted with a man of eminent talents, whose deportment is such, as to induce you to believe him upright and pious. Yet

* Butler's Analogy, part 2, chap. 3.

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his ideas of Christianity are in almost all points different from those, which from careful investigation, you had imbibed. Suppose the maxim true, "Good men never err in things of much moment." You immediately relinquish, as not valuable, those doctrines which an attentive perusal of Scripture had induced you to believe were so. You represent them as matters of mere speculation, and are instrumental of spreading this opinion among others. It is discovered, however, either by the subsequent conduct of this eminent man, or by the decisions of the last day, that you were deceived as to his character; a supposition, which cannot be thought to imply any absurdity. Will it satisfy the divine Judge to say, that you verily thought the man was good? Should you not expect to be told immediately, that the word of God was your rule, and not the opinion of any human instructor; that the question for your determination was not, whether that man were good or bad; but in what light the Scripture represented the opinions, which he rejected?

It is further to be noticed concerning this maxim, "Good men never err in things of much moment," that its claims to catholicism are very equivocal. Those, who believe it more easy to determine from Scripture what is important, than to determine who are good men, may use the maxim to different purpose, and reason in the following manner: The divine word attaches great importance to such and such principles; but in all principles of importance good men are agreed; therefore, those who reject these principles are not good men.

Another inference of a singular aspect might be made from the maxim in question; viz. that to prove the insignificance of any theological controversy, nothing is necessary but to ascertain the piety of the parties, engaged in it.

The truth is that the maxim is neither capable of proof nor does it rest on probability. Good men may commit errors in practice; it is strange if they may not err in opinion. Sentiments, in general, have an influence on practice and character. Particular sentiments have their appropriate tendencies. These tendencies are not varied, because the opinions may be em-

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braced by good men. Could it be proved, that the disbelief of *all* future punishment were consistent with moral goodness, the pernicious influence of that error on society, on personal religion and consequently on the eternal state of man, would not thereby be rendered in any measure, questionable.

It is not to be doubted, that there were good men in the church of Galatia; perhaps the members were generally of that description: yet that church embraced errors, which St. Paul labored with great zeal to correct; conceiving that the tendency of these errors was to subvert the Christian religion.

That portion of Scripture, from which we have been discoursing, affords a general specimen of that variety of feelings, with which the Gospel is regarded. While Paul was hazarding his life for its propagation, the Jews were no less zealous for its suppression, and Festus cared for neither. His indifference if continued was as certainly ruinous, as their hostility. It is not enough, that you do not oppose the great principles of Christianity; it is not enough that you hear them patiently; you must likewise feel their transforming power. When he therefore, who is set over you, as a watchman and spiritual guide, displays and enforces the truths of our religion, do not with fastidiousness or indifference, denominate these speculative opinions, which whether true or false, can be of no serious moment. Do not speak of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, with that heedless contempt, which the governor of Judea manifested on the subject of his resurrection. The Son of God and his inspired messengers were surely the best judges not only of the truth of doctrines, but of their utility. The human character has not since the era of their ministry, suffered any alteration. Your souls will be condemned by the same law, or saved by the same gospel, which they proclaimed. You must be sanctified by the same divine power, by which, under their preaching, thousands were raised to newness of life. The vast crowds both of their admirers and enemies have, for many centuries, been slumbering in the dust. They know, by long experience, the truth or falsehood of Christian doctrines. To them it is a matter of no uncer-

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tainty, whether the preaching of Christ and him crucified were justly an object of reverence or scorn. It is not now, even by Festus, considered a trivial question, whether Jesus, whom Paul preached, were indeed raised from the dead.

My brethren, the current of time is not arrested. It has borne all preceding generations into the ocean of eternity. You are now passing down on its broad surface, and will soon be mingled with the ancient dead. That religion which you now contemplate on earth, you will soon contemplate in the world of spirits; nor will you do it either with credulity or indifference.

We have been speaking of those, who, for almost two thousand years, have been suffering or enjoying a retribution. Ah, what pains must those have endured! what pleasures must these have felt! But to an immortal soul, this is scarce a beginning. When we shall have spent as many centuries in a retribution, undiminished eternity will still remain.

In view of these objects study the divine oracles and attend on the preaching of him, who is set over you in the Lord; and remember, that if he discharge, with religious integrity, the duties of a Christian pastor, he will be "a sweet savor of Christ, both in them, who are saved, and in them, who perish. To the one, he will be a savor of life unto life, and to the other he will be a savor of death unto death."

And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.

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SERMON V.

GOD'S WAYS EQUAL.

Ezekiel 18: 25.—Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal?

That particular part of divine conduct here referred to as matter of complaint, was, That the fathers had eaten sour grapes, and that the children's teeth were set on edge; or, in other words, that the children bore the iniquity of their fathers.

The charge is, in this chapter, absolutely denied. It is expressly, and in strong terms, declared, that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father bear the iniquity of the son; but that the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Before we proceed to that which is the main subject of this discourse, we shall say a few words concerning the charge which the Jews brought against their Maker; and the manner in which their Maker repels it.

Ezekiel prophesied during the Babylonish captivity. The Jews complained, that their grievous suffering came upon them for the sins of their fathers, and that it was unjust that they should bear their fathers' iniquity. In strict propriety, a child can be said to bear the iniquity of his father, only, when he suffers that on account of his father's sin, which his own sins do not deserve. In the sense we have now given, children never bear the iniquities of their fathers. They never suffer more than it would be just for them to suffer, were all relation between them and their parents dissolved. There is a lower, and less proper sense, in which children may be said to bear the iniquity of their

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fathers; I mean, when they suffer that which they justly deserve; but which, however, they would not suffer, were it not for the crimes of their parents. That children do, in this sense, bear the iniquity of their fathers; that persons do, in this sense, bear the iniquity of their neighbors and friends, is undeniable. If a parent, by his intemperance and profligacy, involve himself in debt, he may bring distress on his descendants. They suffer, though not more than they deserve, (for no worldly sufferings equal the desert of sin), yet more than they would suffer, were it not for their parent's profligacy. So a parent may be said to bear the iniquity of his son, when, by being surety for the latter, he involves himself. One neighbor may be said to bear the sins of another, when, through the ill conduct of this other, contention or disgrace is brought on a whole neighborhood. The Jews, who were led captive to Babylon, were deserving of their captivity; yet, it is very possible that this calamity would not have come upon them, had not their fathers sinned, as well as they. In this latter sense it is true, that God visits the iniquity of the parents on the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him. But in the former sense, it is true that the child shall not bear the iniquity of the father, nor the father bear the iniquity of the child; but the soul that sinneth, it shall die. It appears, then, that in this instance, God's ways are equal and liable to no charge of injustice.

But this is not the only subject on which divine justice has been impeached; nor are the Jews the only people, who have brought such a charge. It is no uncommon thing for men to represent the divine government as unreasonable and severe. This subject, considered in a general view claims our chief attention in the present discourse; in which the following propositions will be noticed:

1. There is, indeed, a difference between the character of God, and the character of man.

2. God requires that of man which the latter is disinclined to yield.

3. This difference between man and his Maker, must be re-

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moved by an alteration, either on one side, or the other, for two cannot walk together, except they be agreed.

After attending to which, we shall inquire whether the divine character and law, can admit any change for the better.

1. There is a difference between the character of God, and the character of man.

The former has never had a disposition towards any of his creatures, or on any occasion, for which he could reproach himself; nor one for which his creatures could reproach him. He has ever sought the good of the universe, by means which are holy, just, and honorable. He never hates what is not truly and intrinsically odious; he never approves what is not indeed amiable. He never adopts any measure, for which wise and holy beings would not reverence and love him, were they acquainted with all the reasons, by which he is influenced: Far be it from God, that he should do iniquity, and from the Almighty, that he should pervert judgment. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity but with displeasure. The heavens are not clean in his sight. Is this the character of man? Is it naturally his principal object to obtain those ends, and those only, which ought to be obtained? Does he love nothing, but what he ought to love? Does he hate nothing, but what is intrinsically wrong? Does he always seek good ends by the best means? Has he right dispositions towards his Maker, and towards his fellows? Is man of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Does he never look on sin, but with abhorrence? The Scriptures, in a great variety of places, settle this point. They speak of man, as vile and abominable; as drinking in iniquity like water. They speak of the heart of man as deceitful and desperately wicked; they tell us that the imagination of man is evil from his youth. They speak of the world as lying in wickedness. To the truth of these declarations, experience and observation bear witness.

2. It naturally follows as the character of God is different from that of man, that he will require of man, what the latter is disinclined to yield. If the laws of God accord with his

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character and express it, they must be disagreeable to creatures whose characters are different. As God is perfect and infinitely glorious, he requires, that we love him supremely ;—that we submit to his holy dispensations, and obey his commands ; that we place our supreme delight in him, that we rejoice in his attributes and government. He requires us not only to avoid sin through fear of its consequences; but to hate it on account of its own inherent evil. He enjoins obedient exercises of heart, not less than obedient actions. Towards men, he demands that we demean ourselves, as we could reasonably require them to do to us.

On these subjects, what is the native disposition of man? Does he place his affections on things above? Do his thoughts and desires easily, frequently, and delightfully, flow out towards God? Is it the language of unrenewed hearts: Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none on earth I desire besides thee? It requires no deliberation to answer these questions. We are not by nature, fond of drawing nigh to a holy God, nor of contemplating the society and employments of holy beings. Whereas God requires us to place our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth; we are disposed to love things earthly, and slight things heavenly. We eagerly covet such happiness as earth yields, and have no relish for a state of spiritual purity, where God shall be all in all. There is, within us, an evil heart of unbelief, inclining us to go astray from the living God—a sensual mind, which is not conformed to the divine law. Can any one rationally expect, that it is natural for man to seek the divine favor, to converse with God, or to maintain that kind of life, which in Scripture, is termed, Walking with God? In opposition to pride, and selfishness, are we disposed to esteem others better than ourselves, and not to look every one on his own things, but every one on the things of others? Are we naturally disposed to forgive injuries, and love our enemies?

The law of God is every day openly violated by profaneness and blasphemy, by intemperance and impurity, by dishonesty

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and unkindness; by an evident disregard to the honor of God, and the good of men. And, notwithstanding the general appearance of irreligion, how much better is our external deportment than our inward state! How many sinful passions and feelings exist in the heart, which the world never discovers! How many things pass within which we cautiously hide from the world, but which we are unable, and scarcely desirous, to hide from the infinite God!

3. This difference between man and his Creator must be removed by an alteration, either on one side, or the other; for two cannot walk together except they be agreed. This proposition can hardly be doubted. However unmindful sinners may be that their present happiness is derived from God; no one will imagine that happiness beyond the grave can be obtained from any other source. It cannot be supposed, that creatures can be happy with God in heaven, whose moral characters are materially different from his; creatures, who have a disposition, by breaking his laws, to rebel against his government. How could those who are enemies to God, or indifferent to his moral perfections, join heartily in that spiritual worship, and those ascriptions of praise, which are continually offered to God, by glorified saints? How could they heartily unite in this song: Just and true are thy ways, O thou King of saints, if, at the same time, they had a disposition to complain of the ways of God, and to violate his commands? It is evident, then, that a change must on one side be produced. The divine character must alter, so as to resemble that of corrupt man; or man's character must be so changed as to resemble that of God.

In the last place, we were to inquire, where the alteration ought to take place? Whether the character of God ought to be so reduced as to be no better than the character of men; whether his law ought to be so changed as to allow sin, and require nothing more than sinners are willing to yield; or, on the other hand, whether the divine character and law, ought to remain precisely what they are, and the alteration take place on the part of man?

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This question might be safely submitted to the decision of almost any person.

We will first inquire, on the part of man, whether he be right. Do men feel, that their hearts and lives, accord with reason, and the relations which they sustain? Do their consciences bear witness in their favor? When they consider, what passes in their heart; what feelings, intentions, and desires, they possess, as well as what actions they perform, can they say, that if God's character and law be right, he must esteem and approve them? Are they at peace within, from a conviction that their motives, aims, and endeavors, are rational and pure? Do they heartily approve, what their understanding points out to be duty; and heartily disapprove, and condemn, what their understandings testified to be wrong? If sinners feel conscious of moral rectitude, why are they so timid? why do they often fear where no fear is? why is a dreadful sound in their ears? and why are they chased by the sound of a shaken leaf? why, like Adam, are they afraid, on hearing the voice of God? Why are they afraid to die, and appear at the seat of judgment? If they do well, shall they not be accepted? From the conduct, and feelings of sinners, it is very evident that they themselves think that an alteration, on their part, ought to take place. They do not really believe themselves in the right. They know, that their own ways are not equal.

Let us now look on the other side, and inquire, if God's ways be not equal, and of course whether any alteration should on his part be produced.

Would God be a better Ruler of the universe,—more worthy of the love and confidence of his creatures, should he give liberty to sinners, to walk in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes? Did he permit them to violate truth, when their present interest requires them to be dishonest, profane, intemperate or impure?—Did he permit them to live without prayer or any worship, rendered to him, would he be a more amiable and glorious Being?—But perhaps, in these respects, you are not dissatisfied with the requirements of God. You

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would not wish him to allow these outward crimes and omissions. But you think it too much, that he condemns sin in every instance, and the sins of the heart, as well as those of the life.

Here let me ask again, If there be good reasons, why God should condemn great sins, whether there be not reason why he should condemn those also, which are denominated small? These are of the same nature as the others: they differ only in degree. The same reason, which induces him to disapprove and forbid the one, must lead him to disapprove and forbid the other. Would the great Jehovah be more worthy of veneration and love, were he to grant the liberty here pleaded for, and make this compromise. If you will abstain from great offences, I shall make no account of those, which are less considerable. As to the sins of the heart, Are God's ways unequal, in forbidding and punishing them? This you cannot believe. Men regard the heart, in their estimation of others: they regard the intentions of their fellow men, so far as these can be known. If it be proved that a man has had an intention to injure you, the matter is not forgotten, because the action did not take place: you consider that man as your enemy, because of his intentions. If a child should do nothing outwardly, in opposition to the commands of his parents, yet if they should discover that he entertained no respect and love for them, they surely would not have the same opinion of him, which they previously had; they would think him blame-worthy for wishing them ill, even if his designs and wishes were never executed.

Is it wrong in God that he requires obedience of heart, as well as obedience of life? Would his character be entitled to greater veneration, were he wholly indifferent to the feelings and purposes of men? Ought God to allow them to be proud, envious, cruel, selfish, unkind, ungrateful, or revengeful? Ought he to allow them to forget their Maker, to disregard their fellow creatures, and make themselves the objects of their supreme regard? Ought he to say, "Provided your *outward* behavior is agreeable to my requirements, the state of your hearts will give me no offence?" If the character of God is

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perfect, surely it is no unreasonable thing that he requires love and confidence from his creatures. What is there, then, either in the character or law of God, which admits of alteration for the better? God once expostulated with the Jews, saying: What iniquity have your fathers found in me? Again: O my people, what have I done unto you; wherein have I wearied you? Testify against me. However sinners may attempt to justify themselves and accuse their Maker, it is unchangeably true, that his ways are equal, but their ways are unequal. Now if this appears so at present, it will appear so to the whole universe, at the day of judgment. Every mouth will be stopped; and the whole world will become guilty before God. He will be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth. The heavens shall declare his righteousness, and all people shall see his glory. We hence see,

1. The extreme folly, of justifying ourselves, and criminating God. If his ways are equal, and ours unequal, what advantage can possibly arise from persuading ourselves of the contrary? What advantage can arise from persuading ourselves, that God is wrong and we right, when the reverse is true, at present, and will abundantly appear so, at the day of judgment? But the folly of this is not greater than its impiety. To attempt to justify sin, is of itself a great sin. To complain of a righteous law, to justify the breach of it, renders the guilty person still more guilty.

2. From what has been said, we infer, that the salvation of man is of grace. If God has a right to require obedience of heart as well as life, and in small things, as well as great; if obedience in every particular is our duty, it certainly follows that partial obedience can make no atonement for sins. As every sin is inexcusable, and contrary to duty, none can be pardoned but by free mercy. If we suppose that some acts of obedience, atone for other acts of disobedience, and that we can, by any thing done by us, satisfy the divine law, we evidently remove ourselves from the grace of Christ, to another gospel; we deny the atonement, and implicitly declare, that Christ is

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dead in vain. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and the sparks, that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, saith the Lord, ye shall lie down in sorrow.

Christ is, emphatically, the end of the law for righteousness unto every one that believeth. In him, all who believe, are justified from those things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. But in order to partake in this justification, the heart must be reduced to the obedience of faith.

3. From the preceding discourse, appears the necessity of conversion. If God's charaeter be perfectly right, and the characters of sinners essentially different, it clearly follows that there can be no solid peace between God and them, without a turning on their part. Except a man be born again, he cannot enjoy God. God's character will never alter; consequently, unless the character of the sinner alter, there must be eternal variance between them. And who will be injured by this? Will the injury be on the part of God, or on the part of sinful men? Who ever hardened himself against God, and prospered? Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel. Can ye endure the chains of darkness, and that devouring fire, which never can be quenched? It is vain, we have seen, to make excuses, to argue against the purity of God's law, and the justice of his requirements. All such arguing answers no other purpose than to prove the existence of that very guilt and depravity you would excuse. We must come with contrite hearts to the throne of mercy, lamenting what we are, and acknowledging what we deserve. We must have the disposition of penitents, and abandon the sins for which we mourn. The empire of sin must, by divine grace, be opposed and overcome, or we forever sink under its galling chains. There is no escaping. Except we repent, we must perish.

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SERMON VI.

TENDENCY OF THE GOSPEL WHEN IT IS REJECTED.

JOHN 9: 39.—And Jesus said, for judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not, might see; and that they which see, might be made blind.

IT is well known to have been the habit of our Saviour, to improve occurrences for the conveyance and illustration of moral truth. The occasion, on which the words, just read, were spoken, was the cure wrought on a man, who had been blind from his birth. Hence our Lord thought proper to show beforehand the effects, which would be produced by his ministry. Those whose minds were honest, docile, and humble, would obtain more clear and consistent views of religious truth; while the careless, the prejudiced, and the self-confident would find themselves more disinclined either to receive or obey it. It is by no means impossible, that the Jews and Gentiles were especially in our Saviour's mind. The latter, not having received any distinct revelation from God, could have no pretence for pleading the sufficiency of their religious knowledge. Through the ministry of Christ and his apostles, they, who were thus blind, received sight. As it is written: To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard, shall understand.

The Jews were already in the Church of God, enjoying the knowledge and privileges of such a relation. The event of Christ's coming was, in regard to them, the loss of that relation, and its concomitant privileges. They lost advantages, which they had;

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while the Gentiles acquired those, which they previously had not. But, as the Gentiles were received into the church, on account of their attention and docility, and the Jews were rejected because of their prejudice and obduracy, the doctrine of the text will remain the same, whether this reception of the Gentiles, and exclusion of the Jews were, or were not, in our Saviour's view.

It may not be impertinent to inquire whether the text: For judgment I am come into the world, that they who see not, might see; and that they, who see, might be made blind, means, that the object of our Lord's advent was as truly and directly the blinding of some, as the illumination of others.

I answer, that the negative of that is shown, not only by the general tenor of Scripture, but by particular and express declarations. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The Son of Man came into the world not to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

The doctrine of our text is this, Though Christianity was designed for the instruction and salvation of men, and is well adapted to produce such effect, its consequences, in regard to some, will be an augmentation of prejudice, vice, and misery: or, in the words, already used, Those, whose minds are honest, docile, and humble, will obtain more clear and consistent views of religious truth; while the careless, the prejudiced, and the self-confident, will find themselves more disinclined either to receive or obey it.

This sentiment is not peculiar to the text, but is clearly conveyed in various parts of the inspired volume: If I had not come and spoken to them, said Christ, concerning the Jews, they had not had sin; but now have they no cloak for their sin. (John 25: 22.) The profligate cities of Tyre and Sidon, we are assured, will experience a doom, at the day of judgment, more tolerable than the doom of those cities, where Jesus displayed divine power, and revealed the will and purposes of God. It were better, saith the apostle, not to have known the

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way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment. That, to the minds of such, as are not reformed by the instructions of Christianity, less powerful influences of the divine Spirit are communicated, seems well to accord with many declarations in Scripture; but even if the truth be not taken into view, there will still be no difficulty in accounting for the fact, implied in our text.

Virtue requires of us feelings and actions, corresponding with the condition in which we are, and with the relations, which we sustain. Impenitence is a state always the reverse of this; it is incongruous with the condition of a creature under a government the most wise, rational and holy. This incongruity is greater, more striking, and criminal, in proportion, as our state and relation are clearly known to us. He, who is so unfavorably situated, as to obtain but a confused view of his duty, is doubtless criminal for neglecting that degree of light, which he enjoys. Moral obliquity is inconsistent with any condition, in which a rational being can be placed. But this inconsistency is more glaring and criminal, when the character of God, the purity of his law, and the tremendous nature of its penalties, are forcibly displayed. Besides, impenitence under such circumstances, implies a greater effort on the side of vice, a heart more determined on rebellion. If, when copious light is communicated, our relations and consequent duties are not acknowledged, we either neglect evidence or resist it. Such neglect or opposition eventually produces confirmed habits. The mind is gradually advancing to a state, in which it will not be difficult to believe without evidence, or disbelieve in opposition to it. For, it is not more easy for the artificer to acquire habits of doing his work slightly, than for the mind to form habits of viewing evidence so confusedly or superficially, as to receive no impression from it. A kind of aptness and dexterity at seizing on error, and rejecting the truth, may as well be acquired, as any motion of the body can be rendered habitual. They, who see, i. e. they who enjoy the means of religious knowledge, but are not solicitous to use them impartially, are thus made blind.

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It will not be denied, I suppose, that blindness, thus contracted, is criminal. For, though we are bound to be very cautious, how we attribute the supposed errors of individuals to perverseness of heart, so long as they may originate from other causes, no person can rationally suppose it a matter of indifference, what use is made of our intellectual powers. While we are justly answerable to God for a right use of our agility or bodily strength, no one will assert that we may innocently abuse the far more noble power of comparing and judging.

But to all who remain irreligious in the enjoyment of Christian light, these observations do not apply. Some of this description are not guilty of forming a wrong conclusion as to the doctrines or duties of Christianity. They acknowledge, that unlimited obedience is the duty of man, and is therefore with good reason, required by the law of God. Believing the interminable duration of future rewards and punishments, they do not deny, that motives to become religious, are indescribably powerful. Still, by these motives of such acknowledged weight they are neither reformed nor greatly affected. As the persons of whom we have been speaking, render it easy for themselves to take such confused and superficial views of evidence, as to avoid the conclusion, to which it naturally leads; those of whom we now speak, habituate themselves to similar desultory views of those motives, by which they ought to be influenced. That persons who consider it doubtful, whether there be any future state, or if there be, whether that state will have any dependance on the present characters of men; that such persons should not be very circumspect in their lives, or anxious concerning their future welfare, is by no means surprising; but that those should be destitute of this circumspection and anxiety, who believe that the doctrine of eternal retribution is clearly taught in the divine oracles, can be accounted for on no other supposition, than that of habitual inattention to acknowledged truth. Let all the light, which is conveyed by the Christian religion, suddenly burst upon the mind of a pagan, carrying with it plenary conviction, let him at once perceive the splendor,

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majesty and purity of the divine character, his own dependance and guilt, the justice of that law which condemns him, and the benignity of the Gospel which offers salvation, the endless felicity of saints, and the irremediable portion of the reprobate; let him be at once convinced of all this, and though his heart may not be renewed, his tranquillity will be disturbed. Perceiving himself surrounded by such objects, he will be filled with anxiety and perhaps with terror. The sensibility thus excited, may be followed by a change of character. But, when men are so accustomed to these representations, as to contemplate them with neither anxiety or interest, when they have acquired the power of disregarding truth of the most solemn import, and of sinning at their ease in view of eternal punishment, their guilt is undeniably increased, and the probability of a reformation diminished. Nor is it easy to fix the limits, beyond which human obduracy may not pass. To a dying person, we are ready to imagine, motives to repentance must be overbearing and irresistible. Far otherwise. Those, who have had but a moderate experience in the Christian ministry, have witnessed individuals, dying without hope, and yet without alarm.

Thus it appears, that unyielding obstinacy in sin may be produced by strong motives to repentance, and that blindness may be increased by resplendent and copious light.

But, if Christianity be a divine religion, whatever consequences will, in fact, result from it, must have been distinctly foreseen by that Being, from whom it is derived. And to some it may appear incredible that a wise and benevolent God should, for the express purpose of enlightening and reforming mankind, bestow a religion which, it was foreseen, would with regard to any, produce the contrary effects.

In answer to this I observe, that if the argument proves that Christianity is not from God, it proves with equal certainty that God never has revealed himself to men, and that he never will. Nay further, it proves that it would be out of character for God to instruct mankind by reason, by philosophy, or the writings or discourses of wise and good men.

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I. The objection would be as powerful against any conceivable revelation, as it is against Christianity. Where there is little light, there is comparatively little responsibility. Where there is clear and abundant light, responsibility is proportionably greater. This principle is no less the dictate of reason, than of revelation. Every rational parent considers that child as less excusable, who neglects his duty, when clearly and fully made known to him, than another, whose duty has been taught obscurely or imperfectly. Every instructor has the most gloomy forebodings concerning that pupil, on whom repeated and urgent persuasions have been lost. Every magistrate despairs concerning that citizen, whose crimes have been committed deliberately, and after a thorough acquaintance with the laws of his country. On the same principle are they more criminal, who, though instructed in the momentous doctrines of Christianity, still live as without God in the world. And, as Christianity is liable to abuse, so would be any other religion which God should see fit to communicate. At whatever time, or in whatever manner, such communication should be made, it would still be a communication of light, not previously enjoyed. This light might be improved, or rejected and abused; and those guilty of such abuse, would be thereby exposed to the greater condemnation.

II. We have observed, that if the objection, which we are now considering, prove any thing against the divine origin of Christianity, it will prove that Deity cannot, consistently with his character, instruct mankind by reason, philosophy, or the writings of wise and good men; for these, no less than revelation, are liable to abuse. If men are well instructed in the great principles of religion, whatever be the source whence this instruction is derived, they are bound to regard it; and a life of inattention and vice is more criminal, than it would have been, had their knowledge and their privileges been less. Ten thousand persons habitually employ their accomplishments, their talents, and their knowledge, in such manner, as to render themselves more injurious, and more depraved. They employ

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their intellectual powers to disprove the reality of moral obligation, and confound all distinction between virtue and vice. This abuse must have been distinctly foreseen by him who bestowed these powers. But is it rational hence to conclude, that mental powers are not the result of divine bounty, or that there is no God who presides over the world? If it is inconsistent with the wisdom and benevolence of God, to bestow on his creatures any thing liable to abuse, it is no less inconsistent to create rational beings; for they have the power of abusing their existence, and bringing on themselves consequent misery.

But if the doctrine of our text be true, and the Christian religion will to some, be the occasion of greater stupidity, vice, and punishment, you determine perhaps, to have no connexion with it; you will rather take your trial on the ground of natural religion. This, however, it must be remembered, is not submitted to our election. We have already some knowledge of Christianity. Light has come into the world, even into that portion of it which we inhabit. The day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give us the knowledge of salvation. Our situation is hereby rendered essentially different from theirs, who pass their probation in the region and shadow of death. We cannot divest ourselves of that knowledge of duty, which we already possess. If we attempt this, and cautiously refrain from using those means of further instruction, which the benevolence of God has placed within our reach, that very neglect is criminal. This is the condemnation, saith Christ, that light has come into the world; but men have loved darkness rather than light. We are bound not only to make a right use of present knowledge, but to improve the means and opportunities, which God allows, for the obtainment of more. We must be judged not as pagans, but as Christians; as those, who from their infancy have been acquainted with the great doctrines of religion which none of the princes of the world knew. Consider, I entreat you, what is implied in so extraordinary a choice as that now contemplated. You choose not to take upon you the responsibility, attached to the enjoyment of so copious light, as

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that of the Gospel. You do not wish for a religion which may eventually be to you the occasion of greater vice, and greater sufferings. On the same principle, you would not wish to become acquainted with any well written treatise on moral philosophy, even if it came from the pen of Seneca or Epictetus; for having read even these, you could not sin at so cheap a rate as before. On the same principle, you would not desire to be well-versed in natural philosophy; for as that teaches the wisdom and benevolence of God, it leaves your disobedience and impiety more criminal. On the same principle, you would not wish to possess great intellectual powers; for where much is given, much will be required. And to proceed but one step further, on the same principle, you would not wish to rank with intelligent beings, for all beings of this description may abuse their powers, and bring themselves to endless perdition.

Still perhaps the subject appears to you involved in a degree of mystery. Some we represent, as in danger of perishing through lack of knowledge; and others, of being blinded by the splendor and abundance of light. To this I answer, that neither knowledge nor ignorance, in itself considered, will be ruin to any individual. It is sin, and that only, which destroys the soul. All, having sinned, are exposed to the righteous displeasure of God. Repentance and amendment are the condition of receiving pardon. On this subject, the voice of reason and that of revelation are in perfect unison. But the voice of reason is low and indistinct; that of revelation is loud and clear. The former, it is to be apprehended, is seldom or never heard amidst pagan darkness, depravity, and prejudice. The latter, we know in many instances is heard, and heard by divine grace in such manner as to convey life to the soul. The probability of salvation is therefore increased to those, who enjoy such a religion, as that of Christ. They are taught the true character of God, the nature of moral obligation, the impure and degraded state of man, and the method which God has provided for human recovery. There is the best conceivable reason then, why this knowledge should be desired, and why efforts should

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be made to introduce it among those who have it not. But are they to believe that such knowledge will of itself save them; or that it has any value at all, further than as it is connected with repentance and change of character? And if this repentance be not produced, must they not be told, that the punishment of heathens will be less severe than theirs? To the impenitent there is no safety. Whether ignorant or well instructed, they must perish. But the design of Christianity is that men may not continue impenitent. These things are written, saith the evangelist, that ye might believe; and that believing, ye might have life through his name.

Jesus Christ in our text, and on other occasions, foretold that while some would believe and obey his Gospel, others would make it the occasion of greater blindness and impiety. It hence follows, that the future condition of some will be rendered worse in consequence of that mild economy, which was designed for their salvation. This sentiment, you will observe, is not the result of any particular system of theology; it is the result of Christianity itself. In this sentiment at least, the disciples of Athanasius and Socinus, of Calvin and Arminius, are constrained to unite. Nay further, even if Christianity itself were not true, it would still be an immovable principle of natural religion, that "a man is accountable for what he hath, and not for what he hath not." Through the ministry of God's word in this place, many it is hoped, who see not, will see: and some it is feared, who see, will be made blind. This latter, however, as has been shown, is not the object of Christianity, but the result of neglecting it. It will proceed from a free, but perverse choice, if all who are now Christians, should not be improved; and if all who are now impenitent, should not become Christians. But such effects will not be produced without a general and sedulous attention on your part.

And now may God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shine into your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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SERMON VII.

THE YOUNG WARNED AND REPROVED.

ECCLESIASTES 11: 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the way of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

FOR a man to walk in the imagination of his heart, is the same, in Scriptural style, as to discard all moral restraints, and to surrender himself to the guidance of his passions. Jeremiah, complaining of the false prophets, represents them as saying, "to every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, no evil shall come upon you." The moral character of the persons here described cannot be mistaken. Moses says: Lest there be among you, man, woman, family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away from the Lord our God; and it come to pass, that while he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, and say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him; but the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book, shall lie upon him.

Such being the character, and such the divine estimation of those, who walk in the imagination of their hearts, when an inspired writer, in giving advice to a young man, tells him to "walk in the way of his heart and in the sight of his eyes," we may safely conclude, that he speaks figuratively, and not with design, that the literal import of his words should be followed.

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It hence appears that the author of our text, in order that the truth, which he delivered, might come with more poignancy, spoke ironically, as did Micaiah, when he told Ahab to go up against Ramoth Gilead and prevail; as if he had said, "seeing you are determined to engage in this fatal expedition; go, and prepare to meet the result."

Could the former part of the text be separated from the subsequent words; did it contain merely an exhortation to a life of gay festivity and sensual indulgence, unrestrained and undisturbed by the thoughts of religion; did it say nothing of being, for all these things, brought into judgment; I appeal to some present, whether they would not consider it, as the most acceptable text in the whole volume. Should you not exceedingly rejoice, at finding that the moral law was repealed; or, at having a proclamation from heaven, that henceforth your passions and desires should meet no restraints?

For such persons the following discourse is peculiarly, though not exclusively, designed; and, with the hope of exciting your attention, I would suggest to them the extent of the figure, employed in the text.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee, in the days of thy youth." Exult in the vigor of your limbs, and your bodily strength and agility. Believe, that the firmness of your constitution is such, as to resist disorders, and defy dangers. Determine, that the season of youth shall not pass, without yielding you a full harvest of pleasure. Adopt, from an ancient sensualist, the following language: Come on, let us enjoy the good things, which are present, and let us speedily use the creatures in our youth. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments; and let no flower of the spring pass by us. Let us crown ourselves with rose buds, before they are withered. Let none of us go without his part in voluptuousness; for this is our portion, and our lot is this.

"Walk in the way of your heart and in the sight of your eyes." Speak of religion contemptuously, as an employment appropriate to those, whose intellects, either nature or long life

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has rendered imbecile. Consider and treat the pious, as absurdly sacrificing to a hope, they will never realize; foregoing their pleasure and worldly advantages from a foolish regard to conscience and another life. Represent your own conduct, as the result of superior discernment, independence, and manly courage. If Christians have faults or singularities, delight to expose them, and place them in such a light, as will attach most ridicule to the religion which they profess. If they are allured into sin, let your triumph evince, how much you have been secretly alarmed by their previous piety.

If constrained to pay an external regard to the Sabbath, and to attend on its public institutions, harden yourselves against all serious impressions, and bid defiance to every truth and every representation, there brought to your mind. Emulate the stupidity of the ancient Jews, "whose hearts had waxen gross, whose eyes were closed, and whose ears were dull of hearing; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed?"

Strive to diminish the terrors of religion, by desecrating the language, in which these terrors are conveyed. Associate the name and attributes of God with words or ideas, which excite contempt or levity. Set your mouth against the heavens, and call God to witness your assertions, whether trifling or false. Indulge in all licentiousness in defiance of him, who has said, that no impure person shall inherit the kingdom of God. Assemble for nightly revelling, for intemperance, and dissipation; and as you dread nothing so much as to exist beyond the grave, and desire nothing so much as to be annihilated at death, stupify your intellectual powers, and approximate as far as possible, to the condition and character of that part of creation, which at death mingles with the elements, and loses all susceptibility of pleasure or pain. Choose such, for your companions, who will applaud your spirit, and by whose encouragement and example your hatred of virtue will become the more inveterate.

We now come to the unwelcome part of our text: Know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

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In these words, I request you to notice two things:

1. The certainty of that which is here taught: Know thou, that there will be a judgment.

2. That all youthful sins will be matter of investigation. For all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

The former of these I will briefly prove from analogy, from reason, and from Scripture.

1. Analogy teaches, that human actions will be brought into judgment.

That the resurrection is past already, is indeed branded by an inspired apostle, as pernicious falsehood; but there is no error in asserting, that the judgment is already begun. Even in the present state, there is much of a retribution. No inconsiderable difference between the righteous and the wicked results at present from the hopes of the one, and the fears of the other. The most thoughtless person has suffered much from the disapprobation of his own mind, and from the apprehension of future punishment. Knowing as you do, that reason requires a circumspect and virtuous life, you often feel the pain and reproach of self-condemnation. Your breasts are the seat of unremitting hostility between your intellects and your passions. You are occasionally constrained to pass judgment on yourselves. And notwithstanding your efforts to be fortified against it, you are not unfrequently invaded by the fear of something yet to come. You already experience, therefore, the beginning of a retribution; some foretaste of that shame and self-reproach, to partake in which the Scriptures inform you, that the wicked shall be roused from the slumbers of the grave. How can you doubt, that there is an immortal worm, when its corrodings, even in the present life, have been occasionally felt?

2. That there will be a judgment, may be shown, with a high degree of probability, from the light of nature. Your own existence and that of the universe proves, that there is a God. What his moral attributes are, is not a question, on which you can entertain any serious doubts. If he approves virtue, and hates vice, do you imagine, that he wants the means of express-

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ing his approbation of the one, and his abhorrence of the other? Will he treat, in the same manner, those who honor and observe his laws, and those by whom they are contemned and violated? No; if the author of the universe be pure, upright, and benevolent, no uncertainty can remain as to a retribution. On this ground, even without revelation, we might use the confident language of Solomon: Though the sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged; yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God; but it shall not be well with the wicked, because he feareth not God.

3. That there will be a judgment, is made perfectly certain by the sacred writings. Even Balaam had such clear views of a divine moral government, and of a future state, as led him to exclaim: Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. The prophets were directed to say to the righteous man, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him. Many of them, saith Daniel, who sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some to everlasting life; some to shame and everlasting contempt. In the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, our Saviour has, with some minuteness, and in language uncommonly impressive, portrayed the last judgment. Paul preached not only of righteousness and temperance, but of a judgment to come; and asserts in one of his letters, that we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Indeed this subject was so frequently introduced by the apostles, and their remarks upon it constituted so considerable a part of their preaching, that an expectation of its speedy arrival became current among their disciples.

To enumerate more passages on a subject so common, and so little questioned, can scarcely be necessary. If analogy, if reason, and Scripture, be entitled to regard, there is a season ordained, when human characters will be investigated, and when discrimination will be made between those, who serve God, and those who serve him not.

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Concerning many passages and doctrines of revelation, doubts may be entertained, and difficulties presented. You may question, in what sense those who rise at the last day, shall have the same bodies in which they died. You may doubt, to what degree human beings are depraved, and in what manner they became so. You may ask how it is possible to reconcile the doctrine of human liberty with the prescience of God, or the dependance of man. You may inquire, whether God operates directly on the hearts of men, or only through the medium of the understanding. You may feel uncertain whether the renovation of wicked men is a change, instantaneously, or gradually produced. On all these subjects many great men, and, it is presumed some good men, have been undetermined. But in regard to the accountability of man there is no uncertainty. It is inscribed, in striking characters, on all the pages of Scripture. This is represented in our text, not as a matter of conjecture, but of knowledge: Know thou, that for all these things, etc.

2. The other particular to which I would urge your attention, is that no youthful sins will escape investigation. For all these things, (he is speaking to the young, you will observe,) for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.

That which constitutes accountability, is a moral nature; i. e. a capacity for discerning the difference between moral actions. All beings possessing this capacity, whatever be their nature in other respects, whatever part of the universe they occupy, and however various may be the forms which they assume, are subjects of moral government,—are bound by certain laws, and will be rewarded or punished, according to their observance, or neglect of them. As it respects accountability, whether you are young or old, whether you have existed fifteen years or fifty, is a question of no moment. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, as is evinced in human laws. The highwayman, the incendiary, or the murderer, receives the same punishment, whether these crimes are committed in the earlier, or more advanced periods of life. Society will not suffer its order to be interrupted, and its tranquillity to be disturb-

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ed by the rashness of youth, more willingly, than by the perverseness of age. Neither will God suffer the one, any more than the other, to introduce anarchy and misrule into his moral kingdom.

Observe further, if there is a moral government, it extends to all times, and to every place. If God in general requires conformity to certain rules, he requires it in every instance. It is perfectly absurd to imagine, that while in possession of rational powers, we can be free from the obligations of duty. For if we are exempt from law at one time, why not at another? If for one hour, why not for a day, a month, or a year? A licentious or a profane speech was uttered, you say, in a thoughtless moment; a scene of dissipation was entered upon under the influence of youthful passions. Be it so. But God allows no person to be thoughtless, or to be impelled by his passions. If this would excuse one crime, it would excuse another. Many of those offences which bring their authors to capital punishment, were committed either in an unguarded moment, or when their passions were roused.

It appears then, that when the inspired preacher says to the young man: For all these things God will bring thee into judgment, his doctrine as well corresponds with reason, as with the other parts of Scripture.

Consider that every violation of wholesome restraints, whether human or divine;—all the hours which are lost, or which are spent in forming habits of licentious living;—all conversation which tends to deaden the moral feelings, and to enfeeble the sanctions of religion;—all habits of conversing or thinking, which tend to render virtue less venerable and vice less detestable and more alluring;—every word which is uttered in praise of wrong conduct and in disapprobation of that which is right;—the indulgence of every impure, envious, malignant, or revengeful passion;—all these will be investigated and made public at the last day. Not only every work shall be brought into judgment; but every secret thing, whether it be good or bad: Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to ex-

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ecute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Among the many things, which will be examined at the last day, will be your attention to religious counsel, your improvement or neglect of divine admonitions. The importance, which the Scriptures attach to a clear exhibition of duty and to circumstances calculated to enforce it, deserves much notice. As the Jews had been distinguished from other nations by their superior knowledge, God speaks of them as meriting a heavier punishment: You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities. That the disobedience of the people might appear more heinous, God reminds them of the means, which had been used in vain for their reformation: I have hewed them by the prophets: I have slain them by the words of my mouth. In another place, the various judgments, with which the people had been visited, are distinctly mentioned; to which it is added: Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. The days shall come, saith Christ, in regard to Jerusalem, when thine enemies shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

There can be no reason for adopting this mode of proceeding with communities more than with individuals. When God's judgments are abroad in the earth his intentions are that men should learn righteousness. But if they set at nought his counsel, and despise his reproof, their guilt accumulates, and corresponding punishment awaits them.

I will suppose it possible, that among those, whom I address, there are three descriptions.

First, those who are decidedly immoral;—those who by profaneness and dissipation, put beyond question their profligacy and want of principle.

Men who sail between the tropics, are exposed to a disorder denominated the calenture. Under the delirium which it

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produces, they fancy the ocean to be a verdant, delightful field. Allured by these hallucinations to regale themselves in their imaginary field, they step from the deck and are lost forever.—Where now are those young men, to whom Solomon directed the words in our text?—who rejoiced in their youth, and walked in the way of their heart, and in the sight of their eyes? Where now are those bold spirits, who in every period of the world, and in every country, have cast off the fear of God and of death? Were the pleasures of a dissolute life sufficient to compensate for all the remorse and anguish of soul, which they have already experienced, and which eternal ages have yet in reserve? Miserable pittance of sensual pleasure;—criminal years, that have passed away as a tale which is told! Momentary joys, that are followed by an everlasting abode among the chains of darkness!

Were you assured that the present is the last day of your lives, and that this night would seal your destiny, would not your agitation and anguish be intolerable, both to yourselves, and to those whose compassion might not suffer them to desert you? You have no principles which would support you in such an hour. You are not the less immoral, because you disbelieve a God and a future state, however such infidelity might destroy remaining fears. You imagine that death is far distant, and will not arrive without sufficient warning. Your courage is precisely that of the poltroon, who boasts when he imagines that no danger is nigh.

2. There are others, and I hope a large proportion, of fair, unblemished morals; who, from the force of education and a general respect for religion, perceive something in open vice, at the same time infernal and brutish. The interest and delight with which your characters are viewed, must not however, induce you to believe, that any course of conduct, not grounded on real piety, affords a title to the divine favor. The Scriptures recognize no real goodness, but that which consists in the love of God, and results from renewing grace. Would you be content with any religion, but such as will abide with you at

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death, and secure your salvation? Scrutinize your motives, and see whether you have ever performed a single action from real affection to the Supreme Being; and whether from a conviction of being justly condemned by the law, you have cordially assented to the terms of the new covenant. A good life, I acknowledge, proves the piety, and by consequence, the security of him who maintains it. But in a good life are comprehended repentance, faith, and submission. Without these, you may enjoy human applause, but can never attain to honor, glory and immortality.

3. Possibly there are a few individuals who are persuaded that religion is an internal principle, and that they do not possess it. Convinced that one thing is wanting, you cannot rest entirely satisfied either with a fair reputation, or with those acquisitions of knowledge, which are secured to you by application and perseverance. Between these, and the divine favor, you know there is no necessary connexion. As you expect forever to exist under the government of God, you feel some anxiety as to that part which never dies. When you witness persons of good information, and richly endowed with the gifts of nature, convinced that they have hitherto lived without God in the world, and afterwards maintain lives of active and conspicuous virtue, professedly under the influence of a new principle, you cannot bring your reason to ascribe this to fanaticism or superstition.

But remember, that to bestow praise on pious people, will not prove your own piety. God does not allow you to defer repentance, because you confess that repentance is your duty. By every hour's delay, you enlarge the mass of guilt previously contracted.

My Young Friends, I quit this address with reluctance, and with an overwhelming depression of spirits;—a depression arising from the fear, that no permanent effects will be produced by it; but that you will still neglect religion, refuse the Saviour, and walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes.

I will add one entreaty in the words of a well known poet.

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"By silence, death's peculiar attribute;
By darkness, guilt's inevitable doom;
By the long list of swift mortality,
From Adam downward to this evening knell,
Which midnight waves in fancy's startled eye;
And shocks her with a hundred centuries,
Round death's black banner throng'd, in human thought;
By thousands, now resigning their last breath,
And calling thee—wert thou so wise to hear!
By tombs o'er tombs arising: human earth,
Ejected to make room for human earth:
The monarch's terror! and the sexton's trade!
By groans, and graves, and miseries, that groan
For the grave's shelter! By desponding men,
Senseless to pains of death, from pangs of guilt!
By guilt's last audit: by yon moon in blood,
The rocking firmament, the falling stars,
And thunders' last discharge, great nature's knell!
By second chaos, and eternal night,
BE WISE." *Young. Consolation*, 2093.

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SERMON VIII.

THE PERPETUITY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH.

GENESIS, 2: 2, 3.—And on the seventh day, God ended his work, which he had made, and rested on the seventh day from all his works, which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

THERE is no book, which may, with so much propriety as the Scriptures, be denominated *the history* of religion. This history is naturally divided into three parts, corresponding with the era preceding any written revelation, the era of the Mosaic law, and that of Christianity. Of the last period it is only the commencement, concerning which the sacred writings give us any historical information. In making preparation for this period, the divine attention seems to have been employed during those which preceded. The first age of the world is that, about which curiosity is peculiarly excited. We are earnest to know, whether religion existed; and, if it did, what form it assumed, when the succession of human beings commenced, and the world was new.

Nearly connected with religion is the appointment of a day to be appropriated to divine worship. That a seventh part of the time was once consecrated to this purpose by the direction of God, will be questioned by no one, who receives the writings of Moses, either as inspiration or authentic history.

Our present object is to show, First, the perpetuity; and, Secondly, the importance of this institution.

I. The perpetuity will be considered as proved, if it can be made to appear, that the consecrating of one day in seven to religious purposes, has been expressly required, or approved by

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the Deity, under those three successive dispensations, which have been already mentioned.

1. That such an institution was established immediately after the creation, is obvious from the words of our text; in which it is said, that God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. By this benediction cannot be meant, that Deity spends the seventh part of the time differently from the rest. To him all times and places are alike. The words must therefore have relation to the conduct and feelings of men. It is the will of God, that they should separate and devote to religious purposes a seventh part of the time.

It is material to notice, that, though this institution was binding on man previously to the Mosaic revelation, its obligatory power was not confined to that early age, nor to any period of the world. Much less was it confined to any nation in exclusion of others; for, as yet, national divisions, and civil compacts were unknown. If it were possible for Deity to give a command under such circumstances, as to show the universality of its obligation, he seems to have done it in the instance contemplated. It was given at creation. It was given not to a family, a church, or a nation, but to human beings. In addition to this, the reason assigned for the institution has in regard to all men the same applicability. The Lord rested from all the work, which he had made.

If, in opposition to this, it should be objected, that we have no evidence to prove, that the seventh day was religiously observed by the patriarchs, the reply usually made seems altogether pertinent;* namely, that during a period of about twenty centuries, innumerable events of no inconsiderable importance must have occurred, which could not obtain a place in the short account, which is transmitted to us relating to that period.

That the seventh day was divinely designated, as a season for religious worship, we have the express testimony of Moses. If

* Argumentum a non dicto nullum est, quum in contrarium est ratio.—*Capellus de sabbatho.*

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the patriarchs were regardless of this designation, it proves only an unaccountable omission of their duty. But that these venerable men were thus guilty, we are without a syllable of positive evidence.*

First to take this for granted, and then on such presumption to build an argument, disproving the existence of the Sabbath in the patriarchal age, in opposition to the declaration of Moses, would be treating his authority and the dictates of common sense with equal disregard.

It may be further objected, that if any divine precept universally binding on men were given at the beginning of the world, that precept must have been moral, and the duty, which it required, a moral duty; but that the Sabbath can be no other than a positive institution. †

I answer that a positive precept becomes binding on all to whom it is made known. The two Christian sacraments are positive institutions, but will remain obligatory unto the end of the world. By the Lord's Supper Christians are to show forth their Master's death till he come. It is perfectly immaterial, whether the will of God is revealed by his works or by his word. When once revealed it is in both cases equally binding.

But the fact is, that the Sabbath is by no means wholly a positive institution. As to the worship of God, in general, no duty is more undeniably moral. The propriety of worshipping God, is as little questionable, as the truth of his being. That this worship should be rendered in public, and at stated periods, is thought likewise to be a moral duty. "The dictate of nature being common to all," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "nature re-

* Capellus exhibits no inconsiderable evidence, that the seventh day was observed by the patriarchs; and Grotius, (de Veritate Religionis Christianae,) quotes many remarkable passages from pagan writers, to show, that peculiar regard was among them paid to the seventh day.

† I here use the distinction of Bishop Butler: "Moral precepts are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive precepts are precepts the reasons of which we do not see. Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command; positive duties do not rise out of the nature of the case, but from external command."

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quires some kind of mutual society for the just performance of their common duties." (Irenicum, p. 72). "And, among all nations, that have had any form of divine worship, particular periods have been established, in which this worship was to be performed." (Irenicum, p. 96.) Reasons for the public and stated worship of God are numerous and obvious; and so they appear to have been generally considered by mankind.

As to the particular proportion of time to be assigned to this purpose, it is doubtless the result of a positive precept. Independently of revelation; we know not why a seventh, rather than a sixth, an eighth or a tenth part, should be thus appropriated. On the other hand, we can see nothing in any of these propositions, rendering it preferable to that, which is actually established. As the appointment was made by a Being of infinite wisdom, we know that nothing pertaining to it, could have been the result of caprice or casualty. There are solid reasons, therefore, for that particular portion of time, which is consecrated, not less than for the consecration itself.

2. After many centuries from the creation, God gave to the descendants of Abraham a national religion. In this religion, the appointment of the Sabbath, far from being abrogated, was expressly recognized: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt not do any work. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth. Here, it will be observed, the same reason is assigned, that was given for the original appointment. All this is precisely what we should expect. The primitive institution was made at the commencement of the world, and was evidently represented, as being of universal obligation. Deity having selected the Jewish people as his peculiar treasure, and known them above all the families of the earth, it was to have been presumed, that an establishment, so important as that of the Sabbath, would make part of their national code.

The place which this command holds in the Mosaic law, ought not to escape our notice. It was found in that part which

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was undeniably of a moral nature. This circumstance is mentioned as tending to corroborate the opinion already expressed, that the Sabbath is, in substance, a moral institution, and designed to be of universal influence. In proof of which sentiment, however, it will be noticed, that we principally rely on the preceding arguments, drawn from the nature of the institution, and its having been appointed at the beginning of the world.

A late theological writer, deservedly held in high estimation, has labored to show, that the command to sanctify the Sabbath, was published for the first time, in the wilderness, and was designed exclusively for the Jewish nation. With his usual frankness, he concedes, however, that, "if the divine command was actually delivered at the creation, it was addressed, no doubt, to the whole human species alike, and continues, unless repealed by subsequent revelation, binding on all, who come to the knowledge of it." (Paley's Mor. Phil. B. V. Ch. 7.)

I ask then, why any person, who reads in the second chapter of Genesis, that because God finished the work of creation in six days, he blessed and sanctified the seventh, should doubt that the command implied in these words, was actually given at the creation? Why should it be imagined, that Moses, when confessedly treating of the creation, should immediately, and without giving notice of the transition, inform us of something, which occurred two thousand and five hundred years after, and then resume the former subject? Why should it be imagined, that a writer remarkable for the simplicity of his manner, and directed by divine influence, should so confound the most distant events, as to lead, I might rather say, necessitate even an attentive reader to conclude, that they related to one and the same period? Why should it be thought credible, that the words of our text relate, not to an appointment, made at the beginning of the world, but to a consecration of the Sabbath, peculiar to the Jews, and first made known to them immediately after they had left Egypt. No one, it is presumed, would consider this, as the most natural meaning of the passage, nor

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would any resort to it but from supposed necessity.* This supposed necessity rests on the two following reasons; first the strictness required in the observance of the Sabbath; and secondly, it is represented, as a sign between God and the Jewish nation.

We are first to consider the strictness required in the observance of the Jewish Sabbath. The day was to be distinguished by holy convocations, extraordinary sacrifices, and a rigid abstinence from all labor. It is even said: Whoever doeth any work on the Sabbath day, shall surely be put to death. From the heavy penalty, by which this command was sanctioned, it is inferred that the command itself must have been peculiar to the Jewish nation, as it so well corresponds with that severe regimen under which they were placed.

Would you inculcate, it may be asked, that manual labor, though performed on the Sabbath, should now be punished with death? Or, is it to be believed, that a command so rigid, is universally binding?

I answer, that there is an obvious distinction to be made between the command itself, and the penalty, by which it was enforced. The Mosaic religion contained other laws, sanctioned by extraordinary penalties, and yet undeniably obligatory on all mankind. Violations of the seventh commandment, as well as of the fourth, were by the law of Moses punishable with death. (Lev. 20: 10.) Any son, who should curse his father or mother, was to be treated with the same serverity. (Exod. 21: 17.) Under the Christian dispensation, such a punishment would not be inflicted. Does it hence follow, that the commands to preserve chastity, and to honor parents are not of universal obligation? Again, we should not, under the Christian economy, be justified in putting to death the Persian, for adoring the Sun, nor the Indian for worshipping the Ganges.

* Capellus, though he entertains ideas of the Lord's day, similar to those of Dr. Paley, is far from denying, that the command in our text was given at the beginning. "Et hactenus quidem, donec meliora edoceamur in eorum sumus sententia qui affirmant Adamo fuisse a Deo datum hoc preceptum."—*De sabbatho*, p. 263.

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Yet, when any of the Israelites worshipped the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, they were to die without mercy. May we hence infer that idolatry is no crime, and that none but Jews are bound to abstain from it?

It is true, indeed, that the Jewish Sabbath was very strictly to be observed. To kindle fire on that day was prohibited. We are unable to tell why such a restriction was imposed, and we are equally unable to tell why many other things were forbidden, or enjoined by the Mosaic institution. Allowing that the Sabbath, as we have endeavored to show, was appointed at the beginning of the world, and was designed to be observed by all nations, there is nothing more incredible in the supposition, that God, when enjoining it upon the Jews, should give to it a strictness, not inherent in its nature, than that he should appoint, as tests of their obedience, and by way of discipline, many observances, which were wholly of a positive kind.

The second objection is, that the Sabbath is represented to have been a sign between God and the Jewish nation. The children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever. (Exod. 31: 16, 17.) Again, I gave them my Sabbaths to be a sign between me and the children of Israel forever. (Ezek. 20: 12.)

To this it may be answered, that the appointment of the Sabbath, as a sign between God and Israel, disproves neither the universality of its obligation, nor its moral nature. As a sign or token, that God would not deluge the earth, he set his bow in the cloud; that is, he appointed for a sign, that, which must have been, from the creation of the world, no uncommon appearance.

Further, that benevolence is a moral duty, and of universal obligation, will not be questioned. Yet our Saviour has ordained this, as the character or sign, by which his disciples shall be distinguished from the rest of mankind: By this shall all men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In addition to these objections, it may perhaps be said, that,

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although the reason, on which the observance of the Sabbath is urged in the fourth commandment, is general, the reason proposed on other occasions, relates exclusively to the Israelites: The Lord brought thee up out of the land of Egypt through a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm; therefore, the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the Sabbath day.

I reply, that this argument is useless by proving too much. The fifth commandment is unquestionably of moral and universal obligation. Yet was it urged for a reason, which had reference to the Israelites only; namely, that they might long possess the land of Canaan: Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The whole decalogue was enforced by a consideration peculiar to the Jews: Hear, O, Israel, I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee out of the land of Egypt.

There does not appear, therefore, any reason, why we should doubt, that the words of our text were actually delivered at the creation, and continue binding on all, to whom they are made known. If, therefore, nothing further could be found on the subject, we should have solid ground to support our own belief, that under the Christian economy, a seventh part of the time is still to be consecrated. But,

Thirdly, we have distinct evidence on the subject. The apostles and first Christians treated with peculiar respect one day in seven, and on that held their holy convocations, or, in other words, their religious assemblies.

On this subject, I beg to be indulged with the liberty of quoting the words of Dr. Paley, not only on account of their great perspicuity, but likewise because his views of the Lord's day are known to be in some respects different from those, a defence of which is attempted in this discourse. "It was the first day of the week, that the disciples were assembled, when Christ appeared to them for the first time after his resurrection. 'Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the

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midst of them:' (John 20: 19.) This, for any thing that appears in the account, might, as to the day, have been accidental; but in the twenty-sixth verse of the same chapter, we read, that after eight days, that is, on the first day of the week following, 'again the disciples were within;' which second meeting on the same day of the week, looks like an appointment and design to meet on that particular day. In the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we find the same custom in the Christian church at a great distance from Jerusalem: 'And we came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days; and upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them.' (Acts 20: 6, 7.) The manner in which the historian mentions the disciples coming together to break bread on the first day of the week, shows, I think, that the practice by this time was familiar and established. St. Paul to the Corinthians writes thus: 'Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye; upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come.' (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.) Which direction affords a probable proof, that the first day of the week was already among the Christians both of Corinth and Galatia, distinguished from the rest by some religious application or other. At the time, when St. John wrote his book of the Revelation, the first day of the week had obtained the name of the Lord's day: 'I was in the spirit,' says he, 'on the Lord's day.' (Rev. 1: 10.) Which name, and St. John's use of it, sufficiently denote the appropriation of this day to the service of religion, and that this appropriation was perfectly known to the churches of Asia. I make no doubt, but that, by the Lord's day, was meant the first day of the week; for we find no footsteps of any distinction of days, which could entitle any other to that appellation."

After the apostles, it appears that the Christians constantly observed this day, meeting together for prayer, expounding and

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hearing the Scriptures, celebrating the sacrament, and other duties of religion.*

* Dr. Cave's Primitive Christianity, 106.

The following translation from a treatise (de Jure Divino Diei Dominicae) by Henry Wilkinson, Principal of Magdalen Hall, Oxford, may not in a note be altogether useless.

In the epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians, he speaks thus: "Let every Christian keep a festival on the Lord's day, which is called Sunday, the day of the resurrection, the queen of days and above them all."

Justin Martyr, in his second apology, confesses, "that on that day, which is called Sunday, those dwelling in cities or in the country, came together in the same place."

Tertullian, in his book (de Idolis, et corona Militum) reckons among Christian festivals, the eighth day from the creation, which is called the Lord's day.

Clement of Alexandria, denominates this day a sacred day. (Strom. L. V.)

Cyprian, in his 33d epistle, relates that some person read on the Lord's day; and in his 5th epistle, distinguishes this day, as being the first after the Sabbath, and as being the Lord's day.

Eusebius, in his history (L. IV. c. 24,) mentions Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, as saying, that he had celebrated the holy day of the Lord. Hence among the Gentiles this question was very commonly proposed to a Christian: Dost thou observe the Lord's day? He answered, Being a Christian, I cannot neglect it. To this truth accedes Athanasius. "There was indeed among the ancients an honorable Sabbath; but the Lord changed this day of the Sabbath into the Lord's day; and it is by no means by our authority, that we set aside the Sabbath."

Ambrose calls the Lord's day the Christian Sabbath, in his 33d epistle; and Chrysostom, on the first epistle to the Corinthians asserts, "that it is accompanied with relaxation and a breaking off from labor;" and in another place explains himself more fully, "that the Sabbath is to be an exhibition not of idleness, but of spiritual industry."

Gregory Nazianzen, in his 43d oration, expresses his opinion thus; "For as the first creation took its beginning from the Lord's day, (for it is evident that the seventh from this became the Sabbath because it was a resting from works) so the second creation takes its beginning from this [i. e. the Lord's day] it being the first of those, which follow it, and the eighth of those, which preceded it; higher than the high; and more wonderful than the wonderful."

Basil says, "And standing upright we pay our vows on the first day of the week."

"The Lord's day," says Augustine, "is consecrated to the resurrection of Christ." Again says this father, "Let us observe, my brethren,

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As this is a point, generally, and for aught I know, universally conceded, to exhibit the evidence, on which it rests, would, on the present occasion, be tedious and unnecessary.

We will now, in a few sentences, review that part of the subject which has been discussed.

In the first place, one seventh part of the time was distinctly blessed and hallowed at the commencement of the world. This consecration, from the time in which it was made, and the reasons assigned for it, must have related to all periods and to all people. Secondly. God was pleased to communicate by Moses a religion to the nation of Israel. In that religion, the same institution was recognized and strongly enforced. Thirdly. He who in ancient times, spake to the patriarchs and prophets, has, in these latter days, spoken to the world by his Son. Under this last dispensation, one seventh part of the time was devoted to religion, with the knowledge and approbation of Christ and his apostles. I say, with the approbation of Christ; for if it had been inconsistent with his will, that the primitive Christians should observe the first day of the week, as the Lord's day, he would not to the apostle John, employed in the observance of that day, have granted celestial visions.

It will now, perhaps, be allowed, that the consecrating of one day in seven to religious purposes, is a divine and permanent institution, binding on all, to whom it is made known.

Another question, but of less moment, still remains; namely, which day of the week is to be thus distinguished from the rest?

Rightly to determine this question, it seems necessary to reflect on what has just been observed, namely, that with the knowledge and approbation of Christ and his inspired apostles, Sunday, or the first day of the week, was appropriated to reli-

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the Lord's day, and sanctify it, as the ancients were commanded to sanctify the Sabbath."

Eusebius, (de Laud, Const.) uses the following argument to show, that Christ is above the heroes and gods of ancient paganism: "Who has given command to all the inhabitants of the world, whether on sea or land, that coming together every week, they should celebrate the Lord's day as a festival?"

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gious worship; and likewise, that the original institution, by which one seventh part of the time was blessed and sanctified, is still in force. Either, therefore, two days of the week are to be religiously observed instead of one, or else the Lord's day, or Sunday, is henceforth to be considered as the Christian Sabbath.

But, as God, at the beginning of the world, determined, that a seventh was a suitable portion to be consecrated to himself, it is not credible, that under the Christian dispensation, that proportion of time should be doubled. And in this connexion, it ought to be especially noticed, that neither the fourth commandment, nor the original institution required any thing more, than that one day in seven, periodically returning, should be appropriated to the duties of religion.* This is as truly done, if we follow the Christian, as if we follow the more ancient disposition; and six days of labor are, in both cases, equally followed by one day of rest. By observing the first day of the week, therefore, the original design of the Sabbath is perfectly answered, which was to keep in remembrance the creation of the world; and another event, still more illustrious, is commemorated, namely, the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ.

There are, indeed, two passages, one in the Epistle to the Romans, the other in that to the Colossians, which seem at first sight to imply, that, under the Christian dispensation, no day is to be more regarded, than another. One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.† Let no man judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect to an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.‡

As to the first of these passages, whatever distinction of days that was, which is thus by the apostle represented to be indifferent, we may be sufficiently certain, that it could not be the distinction between Sunday and the remainder of the week;

* See President Edwards's Sermon on the perpetuity and change of the Sabbath.

† Rom. 14: 5. ‡ Col. 2: 16.

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for such a distinction was made, we have seen, by the knowledge and approbation of the apostles, and as it appears, by the approbation of Christ himself, who graciously appeared to St. John, while paying a religious regard to that day.

The other passage connects together meats, drinks, respect to an holy day, a new moon, and sabbaths.*

Whether the apostle here means by sabbaths, in distinction from holy days, the sabbatical year, or the seventh day of the week, or whether he uses the term in a sense, still more general, is not material. He is evidently speaking of Mosaic appointments. By necessary consequence, whatever institution had an existence independent of the Mosaic religion, and especially if it originated at the creation, cannot possibly be affected by it. But the institution of the weekly Sabbath i. e. the consecration of a seventh part of the time, had an existence independent of the Mosaic religion. The inference seems irresistible; namely, that this institution could not have been in the apostle's design, and is, therefore, in no degree affected by the passage.

II. We come now, agreeably to what was proposed, to consider the importance of the sabbatical institution, in regard to the influence of religion.

1. This is apparent from the character both of the human mind, and of the human heart.

Such is the structure of the mind, that objects, which are present, either as to time or place affect us much more powerfully, than those which are absent.

Those objects which religion presents to the contemplation of man, are indeed, beyond description impressive, sublime, and awful. The Being to whom we bear the relation of creatures to a Creator, fills, sustains, and regulates the universe. His eye which is never withdrawn from any portion of his works, settles with peculiar intenseness on his moral kingdom, and discerns without the possibility of error, the actions and charac-

* So it is rendered with obvious propriety by Doddridge and M'Knight.

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ter of intelligent beings. He is now, if it may be permitted to use such language, collecting proofs, and preparing to give public and final judgment on the numerous and polluted progeny of Adam. Still the decision is future; and the preparations are concealed from mortal eyes. On the contrary, terrestrial scenes are ever present; and they crowd the mind through the medium of all the senses. Here are objects of investigation for the studious, honors for the ambitious, wealth for the sons of avarice, and pleasures for the voluptuous. Something therefore is needed, by which the present shall be diminished and the future enlarged; something, by which the mind shall be made to feel, that the things which are seen, are temporal, and that those which are unseen, are eternal. For want of this, the sanctions of religion are found inadequate to enforce its demands.

Besides, those scenes which religion pourtrays, are not such as meet the wishes of a sensual heart. It views the rewards of the righteous, with scarcely less uneasiness, than the punishment of the wicked.

Now in the institution of the Sabbath we perceive an adaptation of means to the end which was to be attained. At stated seasons, it places the human mind where it may contemplate the momentous concerns of the future world. It reminds heedless mortals that however they may now refuse to entertain thoughts of God and a future retribution, the time is at hand when such thoughts will secure a perpetual lodgment in the human breast.

2. This view of the importance of the sabbatical institution is fully supported by Scripture evidence. At the very commencement of the world, and before the destinies of man had begun to be unfolded, this establishment was ordained, either to preserve his innocence, or to reclaim him from apostasy. It was ordained, in order, that the new created race of intelligent beings might never doubt their origin, or be ignorant of the character and laws of their Creator.

3. The importance of the Sabbath, as a religious institution,

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is evident from the writings of Moses and the prophets. Among the various ordinances of the Jewish religion, nothing seems to have been so much relied on, for reclaiming that nation to their obedience to the divine law, as the consecration of the seventh day. This was to be a sign between God and that nation; the characteristic by which they should be known, as the worshippers of Jehovah.* The service rendered on that day, was a solemn recognition of one God, as the Creator of the world. Therefore were violations of the Sabbath noticed with peculiar severity. Because they greatly polluted his Sabbaths, he threatened to pour out his fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. (Ezek. 20: 13.) Nor at a later period had this crime less influence in procuring the judgments of Heaven. Even their political existence is represented as depending on their reverence for the Sabbath, and their fidelity in the observance of it: It shall come to pass if ye will diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring no burden through the gates of the city, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then shall there enter into this city kings and princes, sitting on the throne of David, and this city shall remain forever. (Jer. 17: 22.)

4. The importance of the Sabbath will be further apparent, if we contemplate the religion of the ancient pagans. The Greeks and Romans had a great number of sacred days, accompanied by such rites, services, and representations, as were calculated to transmit from age to age the exploits and character of their gods. In this way, was created and continued a strong attachment to a system of religion, which reason refused to support, and which morality loudly condemned. Now, if the appointment of sacred days could procure for such a religion, duration, respect, and influence, can it be called in question, that the observance of the Sabbath tends to the honor and

* As the sabbatical institution had fallen into general neglect among other nations, its observance among the Israelites, was as truly a sign between God and them, as if they had been exclusively the people, to whom it was given.

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influence of Christianity? If paganism found its advantage in solemnities, in which were recognized the profligate characters of its gods, is it possible, that reverence for revealed religion should not be promoted by every occasion, which brings to the human mind the majesty and purity of Jehovah, together with the resurrection of him, who died to "magnify the divine law, and make it honorable?"

5. That Christianity in any country could not long survive the entire abolition of the Sabbath, is an opinion, in which the friends and enemies of revelation seem to be well agreed. If all distinction of days were annihilated, if Sunday should lose its sacred character, all those marks, by which a Christian community is characterized, would disappear in rapid succession. Ignorance of the Scriptures would produce indifference, and indifference would give place to contempt. Instead of assemblies regularly convened for the purpose of worshipping the Lord of the universe, and of learning his will, disorderly multitudes would rush together for the sake of corrupting and of being corrupted; for the sake of inflaming the angry and licentious passions, and of enjoying tumultuous and wild excess. This subject was so well understood by the atheists of Europe, that, when attempting to subvert Christianity, in a country not peculiarly indisposed to religion, they determined by introducing a new calendar, to cover with oblivion the Lord's day.*

But in relation to ourselves, it may be more interesting to contemplate the effects, resulting from a gradually increasing disregard to the Sabbath, than those which would follow its sudden and formal abolition. The latter, perhaps, is in our country scarcely to be apprehended. The former is not a matter of anticipation, but of present experience.

Let us then for a moment compare a community, in which

* As soon as a general impulse was felt in France to restore morals and religion, measures were taken to recal the public attention to the Sabbath, and the public worship of God. See an ordinance to this effect, published at Paris, June 10, 1814.

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this day is religiously observed, with another community, in which it meets no pointed opposition, but general neglect.

On the one hand, behold a people who greet the Sabbath's return, and consider it as a season sacred to God and religion; a day which renders transparent the veil which hides the world to come; a day, in which we are in a peculiar sense, to assume the character of pilgrims and strangers;—when our vices are to be opposed, our passions subdued, our spiritual state examined, the world excluded, and the great economy of grace investigated; a day when our fears are to be alarmed, our hopes enlivened. In another community, let it be supposed, the Sabbath is spent somewhat more leisurely, but altogether as irreligiously as any day in the week. Public worship is neglected or attended without seriousness or constancy. The remaining hours are devoted to business, pleasure, literature, or perhaps to politics, a subject which in our country, and in the present state of political parties, never fails to produce an interest, and seldom fails to array those passions, which are peculiarly hostile to that calmness and devotion which the Sabbath demands.* No high responsibility is felt. No deep views of God and religion are entertained. Nothing is cherished of that faith, "which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." Will Christianity flourish alike in both these communities? Will moral character in both be equally hardy, unyielding and vigorous? Will liberty, property, and life, be in both equally secure?

Should the opinion ever prevail in New-England, that the right observance of the Christian Sabbath, implies nothing but

* Even in London, as I am informed by a gentleman, of whose long and very honorable life, a greater part has been spent in England, "the post-offices and all other offices are still on Sunday."

"Profanation of the Lord's day is an offence against God and religion, punished by the municipal laws of England." (Blackstone's Com. B. IV. ch. 4. § 9. "Besides the notorious indecency and scandal of permitting secular business to be publicly transacted on that day, in a country professing Christianity," the author of these Commentaries represents, in strong terms, the importance of the Sabbath, "considered merely as a civil institution."

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attendance on public worship, and that nothing sacred is attached to the remaining part of the day, the moral and political influence of Christianity will suffer a deplorable diminution.* How much does the impression made by the public exercises of religion, depend on the state of mind preceding the commencement! Men would be ill prepared to engage in devotion, or to improve religious instruction, who should rush to the sanctuary, from the field, the workshop, the counting-house, or the place of public debate. Nor can it be imagined, that the heart and character will be much affected by the exhibition of evangelical truth, if there be a rapid transition from the public service, to the amusements or avocations of the world.

In addition to this, if it is true that no part of the Lord's day is sacred, but that which is devoted to the public services of religion, in places where these services are not maintained, whatever may have caused the omission, there is no sacred time. By consequence, the Sabbath, either by the choice of men, or the providence of God, is already abolished in a considerable part of our country.

Should we be told, that such views of the Lord's day, as are here condemned, are at present extensively cherished throughout Christendom, the fact will not prove them either just or harmless. Is it quite certain, that these views have had no effect on the virtue, tranquillity, and happiness of Europe? Is it questionable, whether the manner, in which the Lord's day is observed, has an influence on public morals? Or, is it doubtful, whether public morals are connected with the happiness of States and kingdoms?

But, if this subject is interesting to the moralist and the states-

* "We see as from the light of nature, that what days and times, whether weekly, monthly, or anniversary, were designed and appointed (among the heathen,) as *Dies festi*, for the service of God, were to be spent wholly in order to that end, and not to give some part to God, and take others to ourselves. And from hence we see how far short of natural light their religion falls, who make no scruple of spending a great part of the days, devoted to God's worship, in following either their employments or recreations." *Stillingfleet's Irenicum*, 99, 100.

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man, it is peculiarly so to the Christian. On the observance of this institution it depends, not immediately, whether one denomination of Christians shall rise at the expense of another; but whether there shall be preserved, in the minds of men, a sense of our common Christianity. Such observance, as it implies seriousness of mind, and a devout perusal of the Scriptures, joined with a deep conviction of our responsibility to God, is highly favorable to every denomination, whose real object is the attainment of truth. If it is, indeed, our desire, that our neighbors, our friends, and our families, should live as the creatures of God, and the disciples of his Son, as those, who are looking for, and hastening to the last judgment; if it is our desire, that they should feel the constraining power of religion amidst all the changes of human affairs, and in all the departments and offices of life; or that they should hereafter be "presented faultless before the presence of the divine glory with exceeding joy, let us urge upon them a pious regard to the public and private exercises of the Lord's day.

That the interests of morality and religion have much to fear from that daring spirit, with which the institutions of God are so frequently assailed, can have escaped the observation of no man of considerate habits. But if we have lamented these evils, has it been with a grief proportionate to their magnitude? If we have invoked either human or divine aid, has it been with an ardor, importunity, and perseverance, becoming those, who tremble for the ark of God?

Between the Christian Sabbath and the Christian religion, there is, we have seen, the most intimate, and most important connexion. In this question, whether the Sabbath shall be reverenced, is, therefore, involved another, whether the influence of Christianity shall be maintained. Before a decision is made on this subject, consider, I do entreat you, what Christianity has done, what impure and savage rights it has abolished; what humanity and kindness it has excited; what endearments and fidelity it has secured in the domestic relations; what charitable institutions it has founded; what influence it has had in framing

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political establishments, and in rendering them permanent; how much it has done in restraining the desires, and moderating the impetuosity of youth, in diminishing the pressure of human woes, and in cheering them, whom the world had deserted; especially, how much it has done in raising to spiritual life many, who once were dead in trespasses and sins, and in giving them assurance at that hour, when it is felt, that the gains of the whole world would make no compensation for the loss of the soul!

If the Christian Sabbath stands in so near a relation, both to the peace of society, and the immortal interests of man, all who discern this connexion, are bound by the strongest ties to interpose their authority, their talents, and example to support that sacred institution. To this obvious remark there are few people, who will not give a ready, though perhaps but cold assent. But many will immediately inquire, whether there is no other method of securing a sufficient regard to the Sabbath, besides those, which obtrude themselves on public notice. "Let every master of a family restrain his own children and domestics, and the work is done." To this we cordially agree. Only let every master of a family restrain his own children and domestics, and the work is in a great measure accomplished. But, what shall be done if they who are placed at the heads of families, will not restrain those under their care, nor even themselves from publicly violating the Sabbath? What if our passage to the house of God is choked up by the drover, the waggoner, or the coachman? What if the private exercises of devotion are interrupted by the rude noise of children sporting in the streets? Will you say that these things must be submitted exclusively to the persons themselves, and that no one has a right to interfere with another? Were a collection of wanton persons scattering fire and combustible materials in the lanes of a city, would it be officiousness in the inhabitants to take active measures for preventing a conflagration; Would it, in that case, be sufficient that every master of a family kept his own children and servants within doors? But in this case you reply, there would be immediate danger. Danger of what? I would ask,

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Why, that the habitations and property of the citizens might be consumed. True; but are these more precious, than character and moral habits;—more valuable, than those principles of virtue and the fear of God, for which no human inventions can be an adequate substitute;—and without which society itself is a mass without cement, ready to crumble whenever assailed by the hand of violence? Are not individuals injured by that, which injures society? Is it not for the interest of all that laws which have for their object the general safety, should be executed; but especially those laws, which facilitate the observance of all others? "The only means of securing the peace of society, and preventing more atrocious crimes, is to enforce by lesser punishments, the observance of religious and moral duties."

"By the laws of England, there are (it appears) above one hundred and sixty different offences, which subject the parties, found guilty, to the punishment of death." Did this sanguinary code, twenty years ago, prevent the enormous number of one hundred and fifteen thousand persons from supporting themselves in and near the metropolis of that kingdom, by pursuits, either criminal, illegal or immoral?*

Could that pure morality, which a due observance of the

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* *Colquhoun on the Police of London.* Such is the author's "estimate of persons supposed to support themselves, in and near the metropolis, by pursuits either criminal, illegal, or immoral." If this supposition should be incredible, it must be considered, that the author acted as magistrate for the city and liberty of Westminster—and for the liberty of the Tower of London; and that the work was so well received by the British public, as to pass through four editions, the first year after its publication.

The Society in London, for the suppression of vice, was instituted in the year 1802. In 1807 it appeared that such had been the influence of its proceedings against violators of the Sabbath, as gradually to have diminished the necessity of prosecution; that the reformation of the metropolis had been progressive, as to that particular offence; and that in this respect, the whole town exhibited in a considerable degree, a new face; and that what was said of the violation of the Sabbath, could be said of other crimes.—*See Christian Observer for March* 1811.

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Christian Sabbath is so well adapted to cherish, have been diffused over that mass of moral putrefaction, would it not have restored the dead to life? The experiment has, since that time, to a considerable extent been actually made; and the event has justified the most sanguine hopes.—My hearers, I feel that I have exhausted your patience; yet must I, for a few moments longer, throw myself on your indulgence. And

1. Allow me to make an appeal to your interest. The facility of acquiring property in an honorable manner, and its value, when obtained, depend in no small degree, on the regard paid to the Sabbath. On such regard, we have seen, depends the influence of Christianity; on the influence of Christianity depends the morals, whether in a community, a town, or family; and it will not be doubted, I presume, that temporal prosperity is nearly connected with those habits of industry, self-government, probity, and good faith, implied in a sound state of public morals. It will hardly be asserted, that indolence, gambling, impurity, and dissipation, are more conducive to wealth, than they are to the acquirement of a good reputation. Now, these vices, and a religious observance of the Lord's day, can never flourish in the same soil. The former are weeds, which become rank and luxuriant, only when the atmosphere is filled with pernicious exhalations and mortal contagion.

In societies where morals are deeply depraved, wealth, even if obtained, cannot be enjoyed. Friends are perfidious and selfish; enemies irreconcilable and rancorous; deadly feuds interrupt the intercourse of neighbors; and domestic peace is at the mercy of every licentious passion.

I appeal in the second place, to those feelings, which parents cherish for their children. Are you willing, that those, whose existence is identified with your own, should incur, both in this life, and that which is to come, those effects, which naturally result from habits easily formed of profaning the Sabbath? If you are, complain not of that undutiful, disobedient and refractory spirit which is usually consequent to such habits. If

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you suffer them to despise religion, by neglecting that institution, which was designed to promote it, complain not, that your children are idle or false to their promises, or faithless to your interests. Having taught or allowed them to contemn the commands of God, are you surprised, that they disregard yours? These children, from whom you remove, at so early an age, the restraints of religion, are advancing either to manhood or the grave. Are you willing, that they should perish forever, and yourselves be eternally responsible for their loss?

Thirdly, I make a solemn appeal to your love of country.

By the mouth of the prophet Amos, God recounts to his people the various judgments, with which they had been visited, and then reminds them that none of these had effected their reformation: I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places. I have sent among you the pestilence; and your young men have I slain with the sword. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the fire. Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.

That our own national calamities are heavy and extensive, is a position too obvious to be called in question. These evils are felt every day, with increasing severity; and the man is scarcely to be found, who dares to turn his eyes full on the prospects of another year. A desire to escape these calamities, is doubtless universal. The question, how this can be done, is frequently proposed, and that too with very solemn interest. An infallible answer may be obtained from an inspired prophet: Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy. Break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord. If the Christian Sabbath were duly observed, and the sanctuary of God revered, I ask, whether the obligations of virtue would not be more sensibly felt,—whether integrity and truth would not revive, and whether public confidence, now confessedly prostrate, would not be restored?—I ask, whether individuals would not, with more safety than they can at present, rely on the oaths,

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promises and principles of each other;—and whether such reviving confidence would not give incalculable strength to the nation? I ask, moreover, whether we could not, with more decency, and more hope of being heard, prefer our supplications to the great Lord of the universe? But, while our country exhibits so much the appearance of moral desolation;—while the institutions of religion are treated contemptuously;—while fraud, criminal evasions, and perjury, have become so common, as scarcely to shrink from the public eye, or to be condemned by the public opinion, surely in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, or from the multitude of mountains. With all our vices about us, it is not consistent with the nature of civil society, nor the constitution of the divine government, that we should as a nation, be either prosperous, secure or honorable. Counsels may be added to counsels, and measures heaped on measures, intriguing politicians may double their activity and zeal; still while there is no moral reformation, though private passions may be gratified, the country will not be saved. It is something more permanent than the occasional rise of one party and depression of another, that fixes the destiny of a nation. It is that moral spirit, which is diffused through the whole mass. There will forever be a sympathy between the head and the members. Come therefore, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up.

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SERMON IX.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON THE CONDITION OF MAN.

Isaiah 54: 13, 14. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.
In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for thou shalt not be afraid.

This section of prophecy relates to the future condition of the church, and the accessions, which it should receive from the Gentiles. The two things foretold are these; namely, their obedience to the revealed will of God, and their consequent external prosperity: All thy children shall be taught of the Lord. The result of this will be, that they shall enjoy a well established government, political freedom, and lasting peace: Great shall be the peace of thy children; or, as Bishop Lowth renders it, the prosperity of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression.

My present object is, to consider what natural connexion there may be between the character foretold and the blessings promised; or, in other words, the influence, which revealed religion is likely to have in meliorating the present condition of man. This, it is hoped, will not be unsuitable on the anniversary of a society, whose object is to diffuse the blessings of revelation, by imparting to the destitute that sacred volume, in which it is contained. Nor will it be thought inadmissible, that our attention should, on the present occasion, be chiefly directed to those effects, which the Scriptures have a tendency to produce on the present condition of man, as the more impor-

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tant bearing, which they have on his future state, is so usually the subject of our pulpit exercises. It may be important, that those, who contribute either property, or efforts, to increase or extend the knowledge of these sacred writings, should perceive, not only, that they are increasing the means of salvation, but are granting the most effectual aid to the interests of order and virtue, of private and social happiness.

That we may rightly estimate the tendency of revealed religion to improve the condition of human society, it shall be considered briefly in regard to its facts, discoveries, and precepts.

Suppose a nation existing without any other light, than that of their intellectual nature. Whether such a nation would believe in the existence of a supreme and divine power, I know not. That there are communities of human beings, who neither worship God, nor believe in his existence, seems to be a truth well supported. And although an eternal Deity may be discovered from the order, beauty, and design, which are apparent in the structure of the world, it is not certain, that the discovery has ever been made by any but those, whose intellectual vision has been aided by scattered rays from the luminous pages of inspiration. It may, with less hesitancy, be affirmed, that no nation, without such aid, has ever entertained any correct or consistent views on that momentous subject. This will create the less surprise, if we consider what gross, incoherent, and monstrous conceptions were entertained, as to the Sovereign of the universe, by some, whose superior talents and application led their contemporaries, and have induced all succeeding ages to denominate them the friends of wisdom.

A nation, therefore, destitute of light supernaturally communicated, would either have no ideas of God or those which were absurd, impious, or contradictory. Let it be supposed, that such a nation becomes universally acquainted with so much of the Scriptures, as teaches not only the existence of God, but his unity, his natural perfections, and his agency in creating the world. Let them at once be informed, so as to produce conviction, that this world which we inhabit is God's world;

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that he created it by his omnipotent power; that he spake and it was done;—that he said "Let there be light and there was light." Were the information to stop here, I ask, whether even this would not produce, on the national feelings and character, consequences of real importance, and great extent? For although nothing were mentioned as to the moral character of him, who created the world, nor of his present agency in human affairs, there would I presume, be a sensible apprehension of both. It would be suspected, at least, that he, who created the world, had not abandoned it; and that he who must necessarily have some moral character, was more likely to have that of uprightness, than any other. Is there a person present who would not think, that a residence in such a community would be somewhat more tolerable, after so much light was conveyed, than previously? Let this community next be expressly taught, that the Author of the universe is not only intelligent, but of a character perfectly benevolent, and perfectly pure; so that no instance of moral disorder among his creatures can either escape his notice, or fail to excite his displeasure; and that his providence extending to the furthest limits of creation is exerted not less in the falling of a sparrow, than in the regular motion of the heavenly bodies;—let all this be fairly and forcibly exhibited to the view of all the individuals of the nation, and a change will be effected in their political condition, more universal and salutary, than any, which could result from the wisest laws, or the best form of civil polity. The characters, inscribed by the hand of God on the human mind;—that law, which the apostle tells us, is written on the heart, would thenceforth become distinct and legible. This law too has many advantages, superior to those of any other. It is perfectly commensurate with moral agency. It reaches to all the modifications of volition and feeling. In view of this law, there can be no distinction between duties of perfect and imperfect obligation. There is no virtue, nor virtuous disposition, which is not included in its commands; there is no vice nor vicious propensity, not embraced among its prohibitions. And whereas ten thousand culprits elude the vigilance of earthly sovereigns,

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no offence can be committed against the Governor of the universe, when he is not present. The delinquent therefore knows at the very moment that his crime is not concealed.

Another most interesting fact, which revelation brings to our knowledge, is the incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

With whatever soundness of argument, the doctrine of divine moral government might have been established, there would be danger of its being called in question; or, at least, that its influence would be diminished, if, during a long succession of ages, no discrimination were apparent between the friends and enemies of virtue. Many would be likely to say, that the course of events, falling within our observation, does not seem well to correspond with the doctrine of divine moral perfections. If the Author of the universe has a moral character, and has ordained for his creatures a moral law, it is obvious, that he cannot look on such a world, as ours, without indignation,—the tranquillity of Heaven itself must be disturbed by the crimes committed on earth. The Deity would not, it should seem, have permitted several thousand years to pass, without rendering conspicuous the light, in which he viewed the transgressions of men.

Now, by the intervention of our Saviour, every shadow of difficulty, hence arising, is made to disappear; all ground of skepticism is perfectly removed. The disobedience of man has disturbed the tranquillity of heaven. A messenger has been thence commissioned; even He, in whom dwelt the fulness of Godhead bodily, "to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and judgment." An exhibition of the interest, which God takes in human affairs—of the sensibility, so to speak, with which he contemplates all violations of a moral law, more striking, than that which is implied in this event, cannot be imagined. Whatever contempt may be thrown on the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, either by those who reject Christianity, or by those who profess it, I must be permitted to think, that the line of distinction between virtue and vice never appears so broad and well defined;—that the law of God never appears so sa-

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cred, or clothed with such celestial glory, as when it is viewed through the medium of our Saviour's death; and when it is considered, that the object of this wonderful event was, "that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."

I now ask, whether this small number of facts, were they so clearly revealed to a community of atheists, as to gain general belief, would not produce an extensive change of habits and character: whether the morals, and consequently the political condition of such a community would not be essentially improved? and whether the most powerful individual on earth, could by any other means, render them a service, so important to their present happiness and tranquillity, as by convincing them of these facts?

We next proceed to consider what motives to a virtuous life are furnished by those discoveries which are contained in the sacred Scriptures. These writings render it certain, not merely that death is not the end of man, but that man as a living agent, will have no end;—that all human actions, desires and emotions are reserved for future examination;—that this examination will be public, attended with circumstances of the most awful solemnity;—and that consequent to the decision, then to be made, will be rewards and punishment, great in degree and endless in duration.

No person, without calling in question the first principles of human action, can doubt, that these discoveries impose on the disorderly passions of man the most powerful restraint; and that they afford a proportionable encouragement to virtue. All civil laws make their appeal to our self love. They design to make it for our interest to demean ourselves as good members of the State. Punishment is an evil, designed to overbalance the supposed advantages of doing wrong. But the sanctions of human laws are far less impulsive, than those of the divine law. No present good is so great, but that hell is a greater evil. No present sufferings are so great, but that heaven is a greater good. In view of Christianity, therefore, there can be no possible case,

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in which the offender will not eventually sustain a loss; there being in the divine government, no want, either of discernment to detect crimes, or of power to punish them.

This reasoning, you may, imagine is ineffectual by proving too much; for it seems to prove that where revelation is enjoyed, no crimes will be committed,—a conclusion sufficiently refuted by observation. I answer, that we should be no more authorized in concluding that the motives exhibited in Scripture have no influence in preventing vice, because they do not prevent all vices, than in concluding that human laws have no tendency to suppress crimes, because all the members of civil society are not innocent. The fact is, that men, enslaved by present feelings, do not act according to what they are habitually convinced would best promote their own advantage. Whatever reason we may have to be surprised at the prevalence of vice, in countries, where the divine law, with its tremendous sanctions, has been clearly revealed, it is far from being true, that its restraining influence is inconsiderable. If Christianity does not make all men good members of the State, it prevents them at least from being as injurious, as they would be without it. By any, who have been attentive in the observation of facts, this will not be called in question. Let public worship and public instruction be suspended in any town or village for the space of a quarter of a century, and you will not fail to perceive a very disadvantageous change in the state of morals. If for another period of equal duration, copies of the Scriptures should become scarce, and those which remained, should be little regarded, the current of moral corruption, already strong, would become impetuous and overbearing. It cannot have escaped the notice of any one, that when profligate men are attempting to ensnare those, who are younger or less criminal than themselves, they sedulously abstract them from all those places and occasions, with which are connected ideas of a future state or day of judgment.

We should hazard nothing in asserting, that, were a nation to lose all its civil institutions, still retaining rational, genuine and

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deep views of religion, its happiness and safety would be far better secured, than they could be, under the best political constitution and the wisest laws, with an entire oblivion of God and a future state.

Some opinion may be formed of the consequences, which would now result from the loss of religion, by adverting to that memorable period in the history of the Jews, when their sacred writings lay hid in the temple. During this time, idolatry and national disorders rapidly increased. In the guilt of these disorders, men of every rank and station appear to have been involved. When at length the Scriptures were discovered, the king, in great consternation, exclaimed "Go ye and inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words of this book, that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord, that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of the book, to do according to all that is written concerning us." The message of God to the nation was this: Behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book, which the king of Judah hath read, because they have forsaken me, and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and it shall not be quenched.

We will now consider the requirements of revelation, first in general, and then in regard to particular precepts.

As to the general requirements of revelation, they are these, To make a right use of our intellectual powers; to estimate objects according to their value; and to form a character, comprehending feelings and actions, corresponding with such estimation.

Revelation makes its first appeal to the reason of man; it offers evidence: and it requires him to proportion his belief precisely to that evidence: it does not permit, that his assent should be either greater, or less, than may be supported on solid ground. "If I do not the works of my Father," said our

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Saviour, "believe me not." "Now, I tell you, before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe, that I am he." "I speak as unto wise men," saith the apostle, "judge ye what I say." God requires us to believe nothing, which, on an impartial consideration of the evidence afforded, it would not be irrational to reject. Reason teaches us, that a religion, founded on miracles and the accomplishment of prophecy, must be true. It then teaches us, that every doctrine, certainly contained in such a religion, must likewise be true. Limited as our reason is, there are many things in the Scriptures, beyond its grasp; many which, without supernatural aid, it could not have discovered; many, the manner of whose existence is still incomprehensible. Such is the doctrine of a resurrection, and that of our Lord's incarnation. Neither of these is inconsistent with reason; but both are unquestionably above it; i. e. reason, unaided by revelation, can form no opinion on these subjects. Were the doctrines casually suggested to the mind, the understanding could neither affirm, nor deny. What then has reason to do with them? Plainly this, to determine whether they are taught in those Scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God. If they are, it is irrational to call them in question; because reason will not permit us to doubt the truth of the Almighty.

But revelation requires not only, that we proportion our assent to the evidence exhibited, but that we estimate objects according to their importance. If it forbids us to covet riches, it is because there is nothing, which "a man can give in exchange for his soul." If the Scriptures enjoin it as a duty to "love God with all the heart, soul, strength and mind," it is because of the infinite splendor of his moral perfections, and because of those "rivers of pleasure which flow at his right hand." If it directs us not to "set our affections on things below, but on those which are above," it is because "the things, which are seen are temporal; and the things which are not seen, are eternal."

As revelation teaches us to esteem objects according to their

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importance, it demands, that our deportment should correspond with such estimation; by consequence, when there is competition between the favor of God and the approbation of men, between our future inheritance and our present advantage, it is made our duty, in both cases, to give to the former a willing and decided preference.

Now, even without taking into consideration what, in particular, that course is, which religion prescribes, it would be exceedingly obvious, that the influence of these general principles is conducive to the well being of civil society. How effectually would this be secured, were all men to make a right use of their understanding;—estimate all objects according to their importance;—and cherish feelings and character, corresponding with such estimation!

To throw additional light on the subject, we will notice distinctly a few of the moral precepts contained in the volume of inspiration: Render to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor. Owe no man anything, but to love one another. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Recompense no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. In the decalogue is contained a solid compend of moral prohibitions; and our Lord has in a few words, enjoined every duty, which belongs to a man as a social being: Whatsoever things, ye would that men should do unto you, do ye the same to them.

From that view of the subject, which has now been taken, does it not appear evident, beyond contradiction, that, in proportion as the principles of revelation are known, and practically adopted, the condition of man in a social and civil state, must be immensely improved? Would not these principles diffuse integrity and benevolence through all ranks of a community, making subjects virtuous and happy, and rulers wise and

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lenient? When, therefore, the mass of the people in any nation, shall be "taught of the Lord," i. e. live under the influence of revealed religion, "great will be their peace. In righteousness will they be established; they will be far from oppression, for they shall not fear; and from terror, for they shall not be afraid."

For the enforcing of Christian principles, and the observance of Christian institutions, we have, therefore, exhibited a motive, to which no person not wholly indifferent to the present condition of his fellow men, can be insensible. But there is another view of the subject, which ought, in a much higher degree, to engage our attention. Though civil society is a very interesting state of human existence, there is another, which, in point of importance and duration, is infinitely more so. In less than a century, we ourselves, our families, and connexions, together with the present population of our country, and the world, shall, with enlarged capacities for enjoyment or suffering, be transferred to another state. As to the existence and duration of this state, Christianity is the only religion on earth, which gives us authentic and satisfactory instruction. Neither from any other source, can we be informed, on what conditions its pains may be avoided, and its bliss obtained. Jesus Christ is himself "the resurrection and the life. Whosoever liveth and believeth on him, though he die, yet shall he live." The Bible does not indeed insure salvation to all, who read it; but it does render their salvation more probable, than it otherwise would be. It brings to their knowledge a series of events, and system of doctrines, in the highest possible degree calculated to exercise the understanding, to rouse the imagination, and affect the heart. It describes our ruin, and offers a remedy.

Whether we contemplate the Christian religion in regard to its influence on the present character and happiness of men, or in relation to that boundless scene, which it opens to our fears and hopes, the propriety of combining efforts for the purpose of extending its influence is strikingly apparent. In prosecuting this object, we know, that we are engaged in a good work. It is the

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same work, which has employed the attention of apostles, prophets, martyrs, of Jesus Christ, and of God the Father. So far, therefore, as we are engaged in it, we are "workers together with God." If the contents of the sacred volume were worthy of being communicated from God to men by a series of miracles, are they not worthy of being conveyed from us to others, when it can be done by ordinary means, and with little labor? It is not the design of God, that his word should be confined to any one nation, or to any particular section of the earth. Wherever there are sufferings to be alleviated, vices to be reformed, or hearts to be renewed, his purpose is, that the doctrines of revealed religion shall be proclaimed. "Go," saith Jesus Christ, "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." One way of complying with this command is, by sending among the ignorant, whether in heathen or Christian countries, the discourses of Christ, and the writings of his inspired disciples.

We are to notice likewise, that this purpose of God in regard to the propagation of revealed truth, will be accomplished, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." They, therefore, who, impelled by an ardent desire that all nations should be refreshed by streams issuing from the fountain of life, unite, for that object, their prayers and their labors, cannot be accused of indulging a vain hope.

But if such an event shall ever occur, you imagine, perhaps, that it will be produced by miraculous interposition, and, of course, that human exertions will be superseded.

A few moments' reflection on well known facts, will, it is believed, be sufficient to diminish your confidence in this conclusion. At the time when Christianity originated, far the greater part of Europe was inhabited by idolatrous barbarians. All Europe has now received Christianity. Yet this change was not effected by new miracles. That within one century from the present time the gospel should be preached among all nations, is not more improbable than ten years before their occurrence were some of those events which have taken place in our

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own age. The time is within the recollection of almost all present, when the spirit of infidelity was widely spreading throughout all Christendom. In our own country, publications traducing revealed religion, were read with avidity, and, consequently, not without effect. The current against it was rapid and boisterous; and those who did not consider that "the foundation of God standeth sure," scarcely resisted the impression, that they saw a trembling in the edifice, which presaged speedy ruin. The Scriptures were falling into disuse, and were treated with disrespect. But, "when the enemy was coming in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord raised up a standard against him." Societies for sending forth missionaries, for distributing the Scriptures, and for translating them into languages in which they had never appeared, have been multiplied to a degree, exciting general astonishment, though less, than might justly be produced by an event of so extraordinary a character. The same Scriptures, which were attacked with wit, derision, and a kind of malignant triumph, are now distributed in the four quarters of the globe, at the expense of many hundred thousands a year. That, which was spoken by the prophet, is now confirmed: They shall see, to whom He was not spoken of; and they, that have not heard, shall understand. If such has been the result of Christian effort, continued but for twenty years, the way being so far prepared, what may we not expect for a century to come; and that too without any thing, but a usual blessing on human exertions! In this connexion, and on this occasion, I cannot forbear to mention, that splendid and august combination of rank, wealth, talents, and religion, The British and Foreign Bible Society. Of such an institution I know not how to speak in language more appropriate, than that which the Scriptures afford: I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth; and the height thereof was great. The tree grew and was strong; and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much. Those leaves are, by the auspicious gales of heaven, wafted to distant

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islands and continents, and are scattered around for the healing of the nations. The roots have struck deep; they have extended to remote lands, germinated in every congenial soil, producing trees of inferior size, but of the same fruit and foliage, as the parent stock.

When the nature and tendency of revelation are considered, no Christian can reflect, without a mixture of surprise and delight, that Bible societies, in vigorous activity, now exist, not only in England and Scotland, but in Holland, Germany, Prussia, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia, in Europe;—at Calcutta and Bombay in Asia;—at the Isle of France, St. Helena, and the Cape of Good Hope, in Africa;—at Jamaica, among the American Islands, and in various parts of the United States.

When the millennium will commence, or what in particular will be the state of things, during that happy period, I know not. But, when we contemplate the simultaneous and powerful efforts, which in various ways, are now making in so many Christian nations, and reflect on the natural influence of revealed truth on the condition of man, whether considered as a social or an immortal being, it is impossible to avoid the belief, that a broad foundation is laid for human happiness and virtue; and that these great measures will eventually issue in "peace on earth, and good will towards men."

The interest, taken by so many among our own countrymen, in this great enterprise of benevolence and piety, justifies animating hopes, as to the condition of posterity. When we shall have "fallen asleep, not being permitted to continue by reason of death," our children will not be left to pass their probation in a nation of infidels. They will not, we confidently hope, be taught that death is everlasting sleep; nor to deny, that "God, who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the Jewish nation by the prophets, hath in these last ages, spoken to the world by his Son." They will find objects and institutions, at once indicating, and promoting reverence for God and revealed religion. That spirit, which now moves the whole

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Christian world, will, it is believed, in their day, be more active and widely diffused. They will witness the removal of some of those obstacles, which yet impede the propagation of Christianity. Much will be done in their day, and more in the days of their posterity, that "valleys may be filled, and mountains and hills be brought low." "My spirit, that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from hence forth and forever."

If the value and tendency of the holy Scriptures have been fairly represented, men seldom meet together for a purpose more important, than that, for which we are now assembled.

Is our social, moral, or religious state so perfect, as to need no improvement? Has it not been shown, that there is no method better calculated to effect such improvement, than the propagation of that system of truth, which is contained in the oracles of God? Have our endeavors been commensurate, either with the objects of the institution, or with our own ability? When I speak of ability, I mean to comprehend that patronage, which we might obtain, were greater interest excited, and corresponding endeavors used. Compared with other societies of a similar nature, can it be said, that we have performed our contingent of labor, or have offered our proportion of sacrifice? If others have not done too much, we have unquestionably done too little. With no greater ardor, than we have displayed, to instruct the ignorant, and reclaim the vicious in our own district, would the sacred writings have been, in the course of a few years, diffused in sixty different languages or dialects?—Would they have been sent to China, India, Persia, and the regions bordering on the Caspian Sea? When there are about forty Bible Societies in the United States, is it too much, that one should be liberally supported in the District of Maine? Whatever duties we owe, either to religion, or the public, admit no delay. The king of terrors is every year making new inroads, and returns, loaded with fresh spoils, to his abode of darkness and silence. Since our last anniversary, the late venerable president of this Socie-

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ty,* has closed his earthly labors: What thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for in the grave, there is no work, knowledge, or device.

To the subject now before us, I beg leave to call the attention of this whole assembly.

We solicit your charity for no exceptionable, or doubtful object. We are not asking you to favor one denomination of Christians in exclusion of another; but to put into the hands of the ignorant poor that word, by which they may judge of Christian truth; and by which they must themselves be judged at the last day.

Can you, in any way more suitable than this, testify gratitude for your present security from that hostile attack and perhaps wanton conflagration, which a few months since, you so justly apprehended, and which, but for the return of peace, you might, before the present time, have actually witnessed? The benefactions now solicited are for enlarging and confirming the empire of the Prince of Peace. Let the Scriptures be known, studied, and obeyed through the world, and war shall never again disturb or desolate the nations.

> "No more shall nation against nation rise,
> Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
> Nor fields, with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er,
> The brazen trumpet kindle rage no more.
> But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
> And the broad falchion in a ploughshare end."

As to the proximity of our Saviour's reign on earth, his friends may, indeed, be disappointed. When they are looking for permanent and extensive peace, new wars may be kindled. There may again "be distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and men's hearts failing for fear, and for looking after those things, which are coming upon the earth." But those revolutions, which disturb the world, do not shake the foundation of the Christian's hope. "God is not a man

* The Rev. Samuel Deane, D. D.

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that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

What has recently been done for the furtherance of the Gospel, has not been effected, while the nations were flourishing and tranquil. If therefore the earth is to be visited with new desolations, we need not apprehend, that the great interest which is so dear to Christians, will be abandoned: The walls of Jerusalem shall be built in troublous times. Therefore will we not fear though the earth should be removed, and though the mountains should be carried into the midst of the sea.—Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God; the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High.

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SERMON X.

CONSEQUENCES OF NEGLECTING THE GREAT SALVATION.

HEBREWS 2: 2, 3. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them, that heard Him.

KNOWN unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world. He is incapable of disappointment; nor does he ever adopt any new measure by way of experiment. He never enters on the execution of any purpose, which he had not formed, before the universe began. Though to our view, his government has a different aspect at different periods, it is really uniform. The parts, though various, are so connected and proportioned as to constitute a system, in all respects, worthy of the Being from whom it proceeds. That which happens in any age, has relation to what precedes, and to what follows. The Mosaic dispensation had respect, on the one side, to the fall of man; on the other, to the coming of Jesus Christ. It was not designed to be perfect in quality, nor eternal in duration: The law made nothing perfect; but was a shadow of good things to come.

The apostle institutes in the context, a comparison between the religion of Moses and that of Christ. "The word, spoken by angels," was the law, as given at Mount Sinai. If it be asked, why the law is said to have been given by angels, I answer, that many of these celestial spirits, there is reason to believe, were present, as witnesses and ministers to that great transaction. This seems to be intimated by the Psalmist: The

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chariots of God are twenty thousand; even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai. By the martyr Stephen it is expressly declared, that the Jewish people "received the law by the disposition of angels;" and by St. Paul, that "the law was ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator." In what manner their aid was given, we know not; but that they were present, and in some way auxiliary to the great event, is made sufficiently clear by the passages cited.

If this word, thus given, was firm, saith the inspired writer; if the commands of Moses could not be broken with impunity; and if those who violated them were, in a very strict and exemplary manner, punished; how shall we escape, if we neglect a religion, introduced by God's own Son, and propagated by the miraculous interposition of the Holy Ghost?

Similar to the text is another passage in the same epistle: If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant, with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing?

It is evident, that the apostle meant to infer, not only that God will be punctual in executing the threatenings of the gospel, because he was so in executing those of the law; but likewise, that the doom of sinners, who reject Christianity will be more severe than was theirs, who rejected the religion of Moses, in proportion as Christianity has superior excellence.

I shall endeavor to show briefly; 1. That God signally manifested his displeasure against those who were disobedient under the ancient dispensation. 2. Consider some particulars, in which it appears, that the new dispensation is greatly superior; And, 3. Enforce the inference, which the apostle makes, viz: That to those who reject this religion there is no possibility of escape.

1. It appears that God signally manifested his displeasure against those who were disobedient, under the ancient dispensation. By the Levitical law, violation of the Sabbath was made a capital crime: Every one that defileth the Sabbath, shall

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surely be put to death; and when a man was found, gathering sticks on the Sabbath, this was immediately executed: All the congregation, saith God, shall stone him with stones. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

When Achan had concealed some of the devoted spoils of Jericho, though he confessed the deed and its criminality, no favor was shown him. He suffered a public execution; and on this condition "the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger." When Moses came down from the mount, and perceived that the Israelites were celebrating idolatrous games before the golden calf, he assembled the sons of Levi, and commanded them to inflict immediate death on those, concerned in the wickedness: Put every man his sword on his side, and go in and out from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his neighbor, and every man his brother. And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and there fell of the people, that day, about three thousand men. More instances might easily be adduced, to show how severely individuals were punished for contempt of the Mosaic law, and how truly it was said, that they "who despised that law, died without mercy."

If this were true of individuals it was more obviously so of the nation.

From the beginning, a great variety of evils had been threatened the Jews, to deter them from apostasy and rebellion. Whenever idolatry and vice became general, the displeasure of God was displayed, either in prophetic denunciations, or by the infliction of national judgments: and if incorrigibly obdurate, it was threatened, that they should be extirpated from the land of their inheritance, and dispersed over all the earth. This threatening was in due time fulfilled with a degree of exactness, which to the present day, is a matter of notice and astonishment to the whole world. From the manner in which God treated his chosen people, it is evident, that to him can be attributed neither remissness, nor want of veracity. Though long suffer-

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ing, he was not slack concerning his promise. The obstinacy of the Jews did at length exhaust the forbearance of the Father of mercies. After he had, during the course of many ages, frequently admonished and chastised them, he suffered them to be enslaved, their civil and ecclesiastical government to be dissolved, their city and holy temple to be consumed, their land to be given to strangers, and themselves to be removed into all quarters of the globe. They have become "a proverb, a hissing, and a by-word," and God hath given them "a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."

Thus we perceive, that "the word spoken by angels, was stedfast,"—that the threatenings, contained in the Jewish law were not ineffectual;—but that "transgressions and disobedience received a just recompense of reward."

It may be fairly concluded, that the same God, who with so much strictness, punished disobedience under one dispensation, will not, under another, suffer delinquents to escape with impunity.

But this is not all. Between the two dispensations there is great difference. The latter is far more excellent. The particulars of this difference are now in the second place, to be considered. These, it is suggested in the text, are the manner of its being communicated, and the nature of the blessings promised.

God was equally the author of both religions. In that respect there was no difference. But one was introduced by angels, and the other by the Son of God; a circumstance, which is, with much propriety, mentioned, to show what superior regard the Supreme Being entertained for the Christian dispensation; a circumstance, which may be very clearly illustrated by reference to one of our Saviour's parables. The owner of the vineyard is there represented, as letting it out to husbandmen. At the usual season for several years, he sent servants to receive his portion of the fruits. These servants were abused. Presuming that there were some limits to their audacity, he at last commissioned his son. Now this last measure is mentioned, as

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the result of far greater condescension, than those which preceded. So the divine good will towards men was more strongly expressed by the sending of Christ, than by the mission of angels.

Another most important article, in which the economy of Jesus Christ surpassed that of Moses, was the nature of that happiness, promised to the obedient. The latter is denominated the law of a carnal commandment. Earthly rewards and punishments were the sanctions by which this law was enforced. If the Jews were obedient, they should eat the good of the land; their neighbors should not invade them; if they did, they should not prevail; their lands should yield large harvests; their flocks and their herds should be multiplied; they should not experience desolating sickness, nor premature death.

On these subjects, Christianity says little, or nothing. Jesus Christ has not made himself answerable to his community, for wealth, honors, or worldly influence. His disciples are to be remunerated at the resurrection of the just. Their reward is glory, honor, and immortality. Their pleasures will be those of the intellect and the heart; such as none but good beings can enjoy; such as nothing but the presence and favor of God can excite. Had the Jews observed their laws with blameless fidelity, possession of the promised country would, to no individual, have been permanent. To such there would indeed have been many and prosperous days on earth; but exemption from death was not intimated. Christianity, on the other hand, refers all things to eternity. The believer's laurels shall never wither; his crown is perpetually brilliant; his rest is everlasting; his dwelling is a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; his kingdom is that which never can be moved.

Nor can we suppose, that, when speaking of the great salvation, and the superiority of the Christian religion to that of Moses, the apostle was unmindful of the atoning death of Christ, obscurely shadowed in the one, but clearly made known in the other. How far some of the more inquisitive and devout Jews understood the ultimate design of their expiatory sacrifices, it is

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impossible to determine. That they could not, from the Levitical institution, have obtained any clear views on the subject, is certain. When Jesus Christ actually appeared, though the prophetic writings had been added to the law, nothing appears to have been further from the common expectation, than a suffering Redeemer.

But in Christianity the sufferings of Christ are every where displayed: I determined to know nothing among you, said Paul to the Corinthians, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I delivered unto you, first of all, saith he, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.

The Christian salvation is great not only in itself, and as to the manner in which it was procured, but likewise in the manner in which it is bestowed. The happiness which it implies, supposes a certain correctness of moral taste;—a character essentially different from that which is common to men: To as many as receive Christ, to them giveth he power to become the sons of God; who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Whether we consider Christianity in comparison with Judaism, or without such comparison, it is indeed a wonderful religion. Fix your eyes on any individual of our race. He enjoys animal life in common with the various species, by which he is surrounded. Some of them exceed him in years, and many in strength and vigor. Like the rest, he decays, his body dissolves, and incorporates with the earth and the air. During life, he is distinguished from other animals by the gift of intellectual powers, which he is very industrious to abuse. He feels that there is reality in moral obligation; he cannot deny that there is a fitness and dignity in virtue. He sees the right; he avoids it; and dreads a retribution. Concerning such a creature, mortal, erroneous, and depraved, what favorable expectations, or even conjectures, can reason indulge? "If a man die, shall he live again?" If he live, shall he not be miserable? Can it be imagined, that God will raise the dead to life?—that bodies, which are sown in dishonor, should be raised in glory? Can it

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be imagined, that for creatures, such as have been described, the Son of God should descend from heaven, to suffer disgrace and mortal agony? Shall they enjoy eternal rewards,—sit down with Christ on his throne, and become kings and priests unto God? What language is this to be applied to a creature, the most feeble and rebellious?—a creature, who deserves to be forsaken of God,—to be punished of God,—to be driven from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power? He is to be raised together with Christ, and to sit together with him in heavenly places!

III. We are now to enforce the expostulation, contained in the text.

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" To render this inquiry the more interesting, it is necessary to determine, whether this negligence be as common, as it is dangerous. If, in Christian countries, but one in a large multitude be thus chargeable, almost no individual would think his own danger great.

To any person, judging of this subject, previously to observation, it would appear little less than certain; that all to whom it was offered, would vie with one another, which should most readily embrace it. One would suppose, that as soon as such salvation were proclaimed, all men would resemble a hungry, famishing crowd, to which was opened a store house, richly furnished with every kind of food. Like the invalids at the pool of Bethesda, one would expect to see them strive, who should first step in. Instead of which, every age has witnessed a general indifference. From the days of Noah to the present time, all the preachers of righteousness have had occasion to exclaim, in plaintive language: Lord, who hath believed our report? and the great God hath condescended to use the words of disappointment and grief: All day long I have stretched forth my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.

These examples indeed prove inattention to religion in general, rather than to Christianity in particular. But under this

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latter economy it will be more easy to find those who do, than those, who do not, neglect salvation.

1. This neglect is undeniably chargeable on the openly immoral; on them, who profane the holy and reverend name of God;—on them who desecrate the sacred things, displayed in the Bible;—on them, who by impurity defile the temples of the Holy Ghost;—on them, who love to be found among the wicked, and with them to expel reason and drown conscience. To say that such persons neglect the great salvation, does not sufficiently express their feelings on the subject. They view it with sincere aversion. The salvation of saints consists much in the presence of God: The multitude of them that are saved, shall walk in the light of his countenance, they shall behold his face in righteousness. Would this be heaven to those, of whom we are speaking? Would they, who blaspheme God, readily unite in the devout ecstasy of those, who exclaim: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty? Could they be happy with God, who are conscious, that no society is so delightful to them, as that in which God is least regarded, and his laws most daringly violated?

But neglect of salvation does not necessarily imply this unblushing, undissembled vice. Though there is great resemblance between the text and another passage in the same epistle, which we have already quoted, they are not perfectly alike: If he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God! Here the sacred writer speaks of marked and violent opposition to the Christian religion. But our text does not. It speaks only of neglecting the great salvation;—it speaks of that indifference, that inattention, which, even in Christian countries, passes without dishonor or animadversion. It is not, you see, a few great sinners only, whose condition is perilous; it is not they exclusively who have disturbed and astonished the world by daring transgressions; it is not the Cains, the Pharaohs, the Ahabs, and Jezebels alone; it is the statesman, who sacrifices a quiet conscience to his own

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ambition; it is the husbandman, who loves his well cultivated acres, more than the heavenly inheritance; it is the scholar, in whose heart literary fame usurps the place of God; it is that gay young person, whom the world censures for nothing, but too little prudence, and too much good nature; it is the man of calculation and industry, who can think of no object beyond the grave, so hideous, as present poverty, and so inviting as wealth; it is in fine every person, who loves not our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Habitual levity is as truly a mark of reprobation as a course of conduct decidedly immoral; though the same degree of criminality is not proved in both cases.

Now, if the neglect of salvation is so general, no expostulation can be more interesting and terrific, than that in the text: How shall we escape? Will you attempt to escape by proving the gospel not true? What an arduous, what a daring enterprise! You must prove that Moses was not a divinely commissioned leader;—that he wrought no miracles;—that the law had no relation to the gospel;—that the ancient prophets, whose predictions are, at this moment, receiving their completion, were not inspired;—that Jesus of Nazareth was not a teacher, sent from God;—that he performed no works which were above human power;—that his apostles performed none, but were all impiously employed to deceive mankind. Can all this be proved? Can you even persuade yourselves, that the book, which we call Holy Scriptures, had no divine origin, and that nothing is to be feared from its threatenings? No, you do not, in this way, even hope to escape. The awful majesty of the Bible terrifies you.

If you dare not deny Christianity you will perhaps become its panegyrist. It is, you say, a noble, a sublime, a benevolent religion. It was announced to our first progenitors. All nations were governed in subserviency to it. It was introduced by a divine Saviour, and propagated by miraculous power. It declares, that God is love; it proclaims peace on earth and good will towards men. In the eternal blessings of such a religion, the whole human family, you believe, will finally partake.

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So did not reason the author of our text. From the same premises, he drew a precisely opposite conclusion. He did not say, the salvation of the gospel is a great salvation; therefore it will embrace all; but, how shall they escape who neglect it? The emotions, excited by contemplating the sublimity, the magnitude, and the benign nature of the Christian religion, must be joyful, or otherwise, according to the light, in which it is viewed. In the obedient believer, it produces joy; in the awakened sinner, it excites hope; but to the determined transgressor, it speaks no language, but that of terror. It is a benevolent religion; it will, in this quality, never be exceeded by any other; therefore, they, who are not reclaimed by it, must perish. It is a benevolent religion; and therefore, all they, who reject it, must suffer an aggravated punishment.

The reasoning of the ancient Jews was similar to that, which we endeavor to confute. They believe, that the children of Abraham, after having experienced so great mercies, would never be abandoned. On the same principle, as that of our text, God said to them: You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." On the same principle will Tyre and Sidon be punished with less severity, in the day of judgment, than those cities, where Christ preached and exerted his divine power.

Let us consider, therefore, whether we can endure to perish in that wonderful manner, in which it is declared, that the despisers of the gospel shall perish. How hard it is to endure intense pain for a single week! How slowly passes the time! How exceedingly long appears every day! But the oracles of God set forth the punishment of impenitent sinners as being exceedingly severe, in its degree. The strongest language, the most frightful imagery is used to describe it. These descriptions are familiar to us. The profane use the language of these descriptions contemptuously. But even they cannot deliberately consider it without terror. It is not in man to anticipate, without emotion, interminable ages of weeping, wailing, darkness and despair. Yet it is told us by a God of truth, and

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even by a God of mercy, that such will be the doom of the ungodly. Let us bring this matter home to ourselves. These declarations are not the less true, nor the less interesting, because they were made many hundred years ago. They are now made to us as really, as they were to those who first heard them, and who beheld our Saviour's gesture, visage and divine majesty, when they were uttered.

To give additional solemnity to these considerations, let it be remembered, that ours will be no common punishment should we die in our sins. We shall be distinguished among reprobates;—distinguished by an unusual load of infamy and pain. Consider for a few moments. How early was divine truth poured in upon our minds! How early were we taught the first principles of the gospel! How many events took place in youth, calculated to arrest the attention, and which, perhaps, for a while really did this! With what increasing clearness did we, in after years, perceive the necessity of religion! With what solemn language has the Bible warned us! With what tender, affecting, penetrating expressions has it addressed us, that we might be melted, allured, and persuaded! In what a glaring light have the sacred writers displayed the world of spirits! How has conscience remonstrated, and the Holy Spirit reproved and excited us! All these things will be brought to view at the day of judgment, and will be the subjects of perpetual self-reproach: How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? But there is now a season for escaping; not if we persevere in sin; not if we reject the counsel of God against ourselves; but if we repent of sin, and submit to the gospel. Without this, the question through eternity, will be, not "how shall we escape?" but how shall we endure? "Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can inhabit everlasting burnings?" May God of his infinite grace deliver us from making the inquiry, in the regions of woe.

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SERMON XI.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER SHOULD GIVE NO OFFENCE.

2 Corinthians, 6: 3. Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed.

This passage has reference to Christian instructors. By describing the character of Paul and his companions, it shows what ought to be the deportment of their successors in the ministry.

Whether we understand the apostle to say: Give no just cause of offence in any thing; or, Give no occasion of stumbling to any one, the duty enjoined will be the same. In either case, the thing forbidden is the doing of any thing, condemned by morality, discretion, or prudence. In both these ways, it is criminal to excite displeasure, or occasion stumbling. Ministers are responsible for that blame, which, in this manner, attaches itself to their profession.

The most unexceptionable discharge of ministerial duty, may, in regard to some persons excite displeasure, or afford occasion of disobedience and unbelief. The ancient Jews were displeased at the fidelity of their prophets. Their descendants were offended at the ministry of Messiah. Even those, who had followed him for a while, *turned back and walked no more with him.* To give offence cannot, therefore, in all cases, be prohibited. It is to be condemned then only, when it implies deportment, that is immoral, or indiscreet.

The great principles of Christianity are not to be suppressed, because a plain exhibition of them may, by human perverseness

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be misunderstood, or misapplied. Yet it must be the desire of a good minister, not to excite opposition to the gospel, but to procure for it a cordial reception. His success in this respect will, under God, depend in no small degree, on the manner in which official duties are performed. Few persons are ignorant that the manner in which an action is done, has great influence on the result. Even a favor may be so conferred, as to excite pain and disgust, rather than emotions of happiness, or a sense of obligation.

In proportion to the extent of consequences, resulting from any action, is the importance of its being performed in the best manner. If it is essential to the piety and salvation of men, that the doctrines of Christianity should be admitted, and its precepts obeyed; it is strikingly apparent, that whatever has a natural tendency to prevent such admission or obedience should be studiously avoided.

To enumerate some of the ways, in which this unhappy issue may be effected, is intended in the ensuing discourse. A thorough discussion of the subject will not be attempted. That would require much longer time, than can be allowed on the present occasion. A few particulars only will be specified. These will be ranged in three divisions. They will relate to *preaching; to private deportment;* and to *the manner in which persons are to be treated, who are supposed to maintain unsound opinions.*

In regard to preaching—

1. A Christian minister should give no offence, by appearing indifferent to the object of his ministry.

The disapprobation, excited by such appearance, will be extensive. It will be entertained by the serious part of his congregation, and by many who have no claims to such a character. The latter cannot fail to perceive, that preachers of Christianity hold an office of peculiar responsibility; with a just estimation of which neither indolence, indifference nor levity can be reconciled. But obvious inconsistency of character incurs universal censure. No man, it will be readily acknowledged, should

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preach the Christian religion, who does not believe it. But the minister, who does believe it, perceives, that his own immortal interests, and those of his people, are connected, under God, with the manner, in which his official duties are discharged. He comes to his hearers with no trivial message. The embassy, in which he is engaged, is designed to accomplish no ordinary object. He is to negotiate peace between God and creatures, who are in a state of moral insurrection. Asserting the claims of God to the obedience of man, he is to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to acknowledge their allegiance, and to bring forth fruit meet for repentance. If levity, or indifference is, at all times, unbecoming a man, conscious of being employed in services, which involve the public interest; it would be peculiarly so at those times, when he is actually engaged in such services. Indifference, in the preacher, diffuses a spirit of slumber over a whole audience. Unquestionably, on many occasions, hearers form a very erroneous estimate of the comparative zeal and fervor of different preachers. There may be a kind of religious zeal, where there is no piety; and there may be little emotion discovered, where there is uniform concern for the honor of God, and the salvation of men. Still a preacher should cautiously avoid whatever may be construed, by his audience, into a want of seriousness, and Christian sensibility. To avoid this appearance, it is by no means necessary, however, that a preacher should forever breathe a tempestuous atmosphere. When the wind is high, and the storm beats with severity, the traveller holds his cloak the faster; whereas the more equable and penetrating heat of the sun may induce him to throw it aside.

2. A Christian minister should give no offence by exhibiting an air of self-importance, or of undue confidence.

It has become customary to apply to ordinary ministers, many expressions, which were originally used in reference to the apostles. I do not mention this practice by way of indiscriminate condemnation. There are, in the two cases, many points of resemblance. The object of the ministry is, doubtless,

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the same in every age of the Christian church; and the virtues of the first preachers of Christianity may, with propriety, be exhibited, to excite imitation. But surely no man of Christian humility, or even of ordinary modesty, will forget, that in one essential point, circumstances, in the two cases, are materially different. When an apostle spake to a Jewish or Gentile assembly, it was an inspired man, endued with miraculous powers, addressing himself to those who were uninspired. When we address our hearers, the speaker and his audience are equally destitute of apostolic gifts and inspiration. If you say, that to make amends for the want of immediate inspiration, we have the writings of those on whom it was bestowed, I answer, that this is a privilege, which, through the rich bounty of God, our hearers share in common with us. The Scriptures are, indeed, infallible. But so are not they, by whom the Scriptures are explained. As the interfering and opposite edicts of the Romish church are sufficient to silence her claims to infallible knowledge; so, perhaps, a diversity of opinions among Protestants, has been permitted, to prevent them from making the same arrogant pretensions. The ordinary ministers of Christ, as from the nature of their employment, they are more conversant with the Scriptures and the principles of theology, than men usually are in other professions, may justly claim to have their opinions treated respectfully. Still these opinions are to be received as certainly true, no further, than they correspond with the dictates of reason, or the language of revelation. Were we to proceed further than this, we might be justly charged with a design to exercise dominion over the faith of our hearers. Good effects are not likely to be produced by a discourse, when the author leaves on his audience this impression, that he thinks *more highly of himself than he ought to think*, and has been laboring less for their spiritual instruction, than for his own reputation. *We preach not ourselves*, said the apostle, *but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

But are not religious instructors, at the present day, you may

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ask, to teach with authority? Truly they are. But, if there are two things in nature, different from each other, it is teaching with authority and teaching with self-confidence. St. Paul directs Titus to "reprove and rebuke with all authority." He said likewise to Timothy: Let no one despise thy youth. The latter expression leads us to understand the former. How was Timothy to prevent men from *despising his youth?* Not by magisterial airs and high pretensions; but by exhibiting in his deportment, that prudence and Christian gravity, which always command esteem. What was implied in that authority, with which Titus was directed to reprove and rebuke? Not harshness of expression nor tones of assurance. But that, which is acquired by Christian demeanor,—by humility and uprightness, —by a life, evidently devoted to the great object of the Christian ministry;—together with the evident propriety of the reproof itself, and the solemnity of manner, in which it was administered. Reproof, thus communicated, will never want authority, even though the person who gives it should use no severity of accent, and should manifest the very moderate estimation, in which he holds both his talents and piety. Nothing tends so much to diffuse an interesting mildness over all the public labors of a Christian pastor, as a conviction, that he owes to divine benevolence whatever difference there is between himself and the most stupid of his congregation. This idea is expressed by St. Paul, in a strain of wonderful tenderness: We ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness, which we have done; but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

3. A minister should give no offence, either by improper language or manner, when he exhibits to his people unwelcome truths.

That such truths are to be exhibited, cannot for a moment

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be questioned. The example of prophets, apostles, and Christ himself, are decisive on the subject; as the reason of the case would seem to be, even were no example left on record. For, who can imagine that our Saviour should have taught so plainly and so publicly, that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and that spiritual renovation is necessary to our inheriting eternal life, had he designed that these truths should be suppressed, by those who preach his gospel? Or, who can imagine, that it should be no part of a preacher's duty to state the terms, on which salvation may be obtained, and the consequences of rejecting them? But I am now speaking of the manner, in which unwelcome truths are to be exhibited.

It cannot have escaped the remark of any person, addicted to much observation on the consequences of preaching, that the same doctrines, delivered with equal clearness, are differently received, as coming from different preachers. This difference is, doubtless, to be attributed to their diversity of manner. No person, indeed, ought to be offended with the truth, on account of the manner in which it is proclaimed. But, to this it is important to add, that no preacher ought so to proclaim it, as to produce unnecessary offence. If truth is better than error, and if it is important that men should not reject the truth, it becomes, in the same proportion, a duty in ministers to preach it in such manner, as is least likely to create prejudice. This is so plain a proposition, that it stands in need, neither of repetition nor comment. It seems sometimes to be imagined, that, unless evangelical truth is conveyed in language known to be most offensive, and in a manner the least conciliating and gracious, a criminal sacrifice is made to the prejudices of men, or to our own ease and reputation. In this sentiment, permit me to ask, whether there is either truth, or justice, or wisdom? Sounds, in themselves considered, have no connexion with piety or salvation. Is the eternal welfare of men more secure, because the truth is conveyed to their minds in one set of arbitrary signs, rather than in another? Every upright minister of Jesus Christ, may feel himself bound to preach that, which, he has reason to

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fear, will, to some, be matter of offence. But he, who chooses to give offence, chooses to excite prejudice against the gospel. And what is this but choosing that the very design of his ministry should be frustrated? A condescending prince, let it be imagined, commissions his servants to offer a full amnesty to disorderly subjects, on condition of their becoming obedient to the government in future. This servant may, to these subjects, represent, in plain terms, their present danger and the certainty of punishment, should the terms of forgiveness be rejected. But surely the lord of this servant will not applaud him, for executing his commission in a manner the most offensive, and least favorable to the great object, for which he was sent.

Nothing tends so directly to disarm opposition, as a conviction, that the only reason, why a preacher exhibits unwelcome doctrines, is because he dares not suppress them; because he would, by all means, save his own soul, and the souls of them who hear him; and because he is impelled by feelings similar to those of the prophet, when he said: I have not desired the woeful day, O Lord, Thou knowest. Different, indeed, is the character of that minister, and different will be the impression, which he makes on the minds of an audience, who, through the medium of sacred truth, gratifies some of the most unhallowed feelings of the human heart, and then congratulates himself on his own fidelity and boldness, in defending sound principles and in exhibiting to sinners their true character.

You will ask, perhaps, is it not important that sinners should be made to feel? I answer, yes. But what should they feel? Displeasure and prejudice against the speaker, or conviction of their own demerit, and contrition on account of having violated the divine law? You ask again, whether the sinner's character is not to be carefully investigated, and his wounds thoroughly explored. I answer, yes. But there is a great difference between the necessary operations of a humane physician, who participates the pain which he occasions, and the work of an executioner, who pleases himself with every new opportunity of showing how much address and apathy his vocation has taught him.

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Respecting both the language to be used, and the temper displayed by teachers of religion, the sacred Scriptures give us clear directions: The preacher, said Solomon, chose out acceptable words, even words of truth. Truth is not to be sacrificed to acceptable language; but such terms are to be used, as shall render truth least offensive and most effectual. As to the temper of a Christian pastor, St. Paul has left on record the following remark: The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, in meekness instructing those that oppose themelves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgement of the truth.

II. Cautions against giving offence may be necessary, in regard to ordinary deportment.

The minister of Christ is to give no offence by unchristian levity. On the importance of preaching seriously, some remarks have already been made. But, in the various parts of a character, there ought doubtless to be a consistency. Habitual levity cannot be indulged by men, who have in view a great object. This results from our natures. Such an object, by absorbing the attention, prevents smaller things from gaining access to the mind; or, if not, a comparison between them and that great object, to the contemplation of which the mind is accustomed, shows how unworthy the former are to engross human anxiety. It is asserted of that illustrious warrior and statesman, who is so justly the boast of our nation, that, during the more critical years of the revolutionary contest, he was seldom known to indulge the least hilarity. The reason is obvious. He felt as a man on whose shoulders rested the burden of a nation's cares. The Christian minister has an object still more momentous. In his view are life and immortality; and this, in relation, not only to himself, but to his people. I do not say, that all these considerations united should produce severity of mein; much less moroseness. But surely, in such a character, caution and gravity are indispensable. He will find no time for unprofitable amusement, or gay conversation, and little, I

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should think, for any visits, but such as are pastoral; by which I mean those, that, being improved for the purpose of giving religious instruction or advice, contribute to the great object of his sacred office.

No man, and least of all, a minister, can be justified in wasting his time. He has, therefore, no leisure to enter curiously into the concerns of other men, further than pastoral duty may require. Nor unless impelled by hard necessity, can he be justified in prosecuting any employment foreign to the ministry.

So far as the Christian temper prevails, it will produce a happy union of gravity and mildness. The absence of either of these implies a very injurious defect in the character of a religious instructor.

> "He bore his great commission in his look;
> "But sweetly tempered awe, and softened all he spoke!"

How these virtues were exhibited in the ministry of St. Paul, will appear from the following passages: Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, justly and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you. Ye know how we exhorted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you to his kingdom and glory.—We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.

III. At a time, when peculiar boldness is indulged in theological speculation, any minister of Christ may be called upon to defend what he believes to be the faith, once delivered to the saints. To do this with ingenuity and triumphant success, may appear to him the principal thing—all indeed, which is entitled to regard. But, let it be remembered, that intellectual abilities are perfectly distinct from the Christian temper. The latter is that more excellent way, in comparison of which there is little value even in the possession of miraculous powers. It is perfectly possible, that an able defence of what are justly denominated the vital principles of Christianity, may ex-

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hibit a state of feelings, over which these principles have little or no control. Persons may contend for the mastery, not less on religious subjects, than in other species of controversy. When the leading doctrines of Christianity are defended with an irreligious temper, the injury is twofold; first, the irritation, which will thus be produced in the mind of an opponent, will tend to close the avenues, at which conviction might otherwise enter; secondly, he will conclude, not justly, indeed, but with great plausibility, that principles, whether true or false, can have little value, which have done nothing towards subduing the pride or passion of one, who defends them. Every theological disputant must be constrained to acknowledge, that ungoldly feelings, so far as they prevail, are more criminal in himself, than in his adversary; for this obvious reason, that he professes to have better views of divine truth, which enable him more distinctly to perceive his duty. He acts, therefore, by his own acknowledgement, in opposition to greater light, and stronger obligations. However pacific the spirit which Christianity breathes, it does by no means condemn all theological controversy. There may be circumstances, in which it will be our duty, not only to contend, but to do it earnestly. Thus far we have apostolic authority. The same authority further asserts, that he who striveth, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The temper of Christ must be displayed by those, who defend his doctrine. They are bound to act with all candor, probity, and fairness. If a man has fallen into gross and dangerous error, he has not thereby lost those rights, which are common to every rational being. We are bound to speak nothing but truth concerning him. If we are required to feed an enemy, when hungry, and clothe him, when naked, we are surely bound not to treat an opponent with injustice. If he has talents, or learning, or suavity of temper, or maintains an irreproachable moral character, for these qualities he is to be allowed full credit. Nor are his faults to be mentioned with greater severity, than similar failings, when they appear in persons of better sentiments. No undue advantages are to be ta-

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ken of such a person. The cause of Christ does not require to be supported by unjustifiable means. To proceed fairly is not only a solemn duty, but it is even at present advantageous. Any persons, who pretend to be wiser than God, and would defend his holy doctrines by any other measures, than by those, which he allows, will eventually find, that they are injuring the very cause, which they profess to uphold, and will be convinced, "that the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and that the weakness of God is stronger than man."

Christians never do more for the interests of truth and the honor of God, than when they manifest in their treatment of all classes and denominations of men, a reverent regard to Christ's commandments. Such a regard implies unyielding integrity, and caution not to be injurious even to an enemy. This temper was most happily displayed by the first preachers of Christianity: We are not, saith the apostle, as many, who corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ.

We have now made those few remarks, which were intended under the three divisions, mentioned at the beginning of this discourse. Many important ideas, nearly connected with the subject, but not mentioned, will present themselves to the mind of every reflecting hearer. To the remarks, which have been made, we ask no greater attention, than, upon examination, their truth and importance may be found to require.

My brethren, your pastor is cautioned in the words of the text to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed. Permit me to warn you of the danger of receiving offence,—of stumbling as to religion, on account either of his fidelity or his imperfections. If you conceive prejudices against the gospel either from the virtues or the errors of its advocates, the consequences as to your spiritual interest, may be most unhappy; and they may be eternal. Religion is immutable. It is independent both of your pastor and you. Its excellence is not tarnished, though he should disgrace it. Its truths are not invalidated, though you should reject them. In whatever man-

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ner it is preached by him, or received by you, it is that, by which you will both be judged at the last day.

A long suffering God is now using means to enlighten and reclaim sinners. If this object is not effected by the instrumentality of one, it may be by that of another. But, in the state, to which we are going, means are at an end, probation ceases, and character becomes immutable. Be persuaded then to receive and embrace the word of reconciliation. Reject no longer the Son of God: Refuse not Him that speaketh, whose voice once shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

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SERMON XII.

WAR AND PEACE.

PSALM 72: 7. In his days shall the righteous flourish: and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth.

THIS Psalm, it is believed, refers to Solomon, as typifying the Messiah. In colors of uncommon beauty, it portrays the blessings of good government; blessings which will never be fully enjoyed, till "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."

In the present discourse, the following arrangement will be observed. After showing, that war is a calamity, both extensive and severe, I shall attempt, from the text and other passages of Scripture, to return an answer to this inquiry: Shall the sword devour forever?

War is a calamity of very wide extent. Originating in the depravity of the human heart, it is likely to prevail, wherever there are human beings, in whom this depravity is unsubdued. Accordingly we find, that war has been common in every age, and among all nations, whether barbarous or refined. Contention began, even before the civil state could have been formed. It commenced in the first family, and during the life of our first parents. Abel was slain by the hands of a brother. As the number of human beings increased, similar enormities became more common. As a reason why God destroyed all flesh by a deluge, it is recorded, that the "earth was filled with violence." It is probably in reference to this, that God immediately after the deluge, with so much solemnity, prohibited the wanton destruction of human life: And surely your blood of your lives will I require. At the hand of every beast will I require it;

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and at the hand of every man; and at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. (Gen. 9: 5.)

The passion for war and conquest was next displayed in Nimrod, who, to the character of a mighty hunter, added that of a chieftain and statesman. In the days of Abraham, kings had formed alliances for the purpose of war. Nine kings were joined together in one battle in the "vale of Siddim." (Gen. 14: 3.)

When the descendants of Israel were established in the land of Canaan, they had wars not unfrequently among themselves, and almost perpetually with surrounding nations. The history of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, is, for the most part, military history. These nations have long since disappeared. After having trampled on the rights of States less powerful; after having, for many ages, revelled with impunity on the spoils of others; at length made feeble by their own greatness, they were vanquished, in succession, by other States possessing the same ambition, but not, like themselves, enervated by age and luxury. So universally have events corresponded with the declaration of Christ: He that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword. The great kingdoms and empires of ancient times, with all their power and splendor, were, at different periods, swept from the earth by the storms of war. The prophet Ezekiel, with a mind glowing with inspiration, has imagined that world which contains the spirits of all the dead. As death is the end of all men, war is represented by him as the death of nations: Ashur is there and all her company. His graves are round about him; all of them slain, fallen by the sword. Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave; all of them slain, fallen by the sword; which are gone down uncircumcised, to the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet they have borne their shame with them, that go down to the pit. There is Meshech and Tubal, with all her multitude; her graves are round about him; all of them uncir-

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cumcised, slain with the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. And they shall not lie with the mighty, that are slain of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war; and they have laid their swords under their heads. But their iniquity shall be upon their bones; though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which, with their might, are laid by them that are slain by the sword. There be the princes of the North, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the slain. With their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they bear their shame with them, that go down to the pit.

The remarks which we have made in reference to ancient kingdoms and empires, may be applied to modern Europe. In its history nothing is so prominent, and nothing so much engrosses the attention, as the operation and consequences of war. Those hordes of barbarians, that, from different quarters, and at different times, invaded and eventually crushed the Roman empire, were of a character, daring, ferocious, and warlike. (Liv. v. 36.) They scarcely pretend to any other right, than that which was founded on their courage, fortune, and military strength: We carry, said they, our right in our arms; and all things are the property of brave men. (Liv. Lib. v.) Whoever considers the extent and power of the Roman empire, will readily perceive that its subversion could not have been effected without infinite sufferings, and enormous waste of human lives. As the States now occupying Europe, were formed by a union of those hordes, with fragments of the ancient empire, they have inherited the same spirit, somewhat broken indeed, and softened by the progress of refinement, and the mild genius of Christianity. Among these States, the last twenty years have constituted an era of pre-eminent desolation.

Hitherto we have alluded to those nations and empires, with which history is most familiar. But the calamity and opprobrium of war are not confined to any community or division of the human race. When America was first exhibited to the view of

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an astonished world, its inhabitants were not found in this respect, to possess any peculiar traits of character. Impelled by the same passions, they gave vent to them in the same manner. Their enterprises were those of hunting and war, i. e. their chief employment was to preserve their own lives, and to kill their enemies. A similar remark may be made in reference to the savage inhabitants, possessing the isles, either of the Pacific or Indian Ocean. They are known to have been, in the words of inspiration: hateful, and hating one another.

From the remarks already made, it appears, that whatever pre-eminence man may possess, when compared with other animals inhabiting the globe, this superiority is not evinced by the absence of hostile feelings and habits. Wherever there are human beings, there are wars; wherever wars exist, there is deadly hatred;—a public, systematical endeavor to shed human blood. Nor are we to imagine, that though war may be an evil from which no nation is wholly exempt, it is, however, an evil of unfrequent occurrence. From the building of Rome, to the reign of Augustus; i. e. for a period of more than seven hundred years, the temple of Janus was shut but twice; i. e. with only two interruptions, the Romans had war for seven centuries. From an account, published in London, four years since, it appears that from the year 1110 to 1813, the number of wars between France and England, was twenty four; and that two hundred and sixty years of the seven hundred were employed by those nations, in hostility and mutual destruction; that from 1161, to 1471, a term of three hundred and ten years, one hundred and eighty six were spent in war; that from 1368 they were at war one hundred and one years in one hundred and three, having a peace only of two years duration. In the national character, either of the ancient Romans, or of the modern French and English, ferocity cannot be considered as characteristic. If other nations, therefore, have not, for as great a proportion of the time, endured the burdens, and felt the calamities of war, it must be attributed to fortuitous causes, and not to moral principle.

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It will readily occur to you that, even if the evils of war were moderate in their kind, they would still compose a vast aggregate, considering their great extent, and the frequency of their occurrence. We are next to show, that the evils of war are not moderate in their kind.

It is, by no means, my intention, on this occasion, to attempt a finished picture. I shall only sketch a few of its hard and prominent features; and these will be exhibited, not in the glowing colors which the imagination might furnish, but in the simple attire of authentic history.

In every war, it has been thought, that as many perish by fatigue, casualty, and disease, as are slain in battle; and those who are slain in one battle, may, or may not be, a small part of all that fall in arms, during the existence of a war. In the battle fought at Issus, between Darius and Alexander, the former is stated to have lost one hundred and ten thousand. In the first battle which the Romans fought with the Cimbri and Teutones, nations of Germany, the latter slew of their invaders, eighty thousand. In the second battle, the fortune of war was changed, and the Germans lost one hundred and forty thousand slain.* When Attila entered Gaul, at the head of a vast army of Huns, in one battle with Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, he lost, says the historian, at least one hundred and sixty thousand men.† The loss sustained by the French, in the battle of Cressy, was somewhat more than thirty thousand. In the battle of Angora, in 1402, between Bajazet and Tamerlane, the whole number of slain is stated by the Abbe Millot, to have been three hundred and forty thousand. In the action of Malplaquet, the Duke of Marlborough, though victorious, is said to have left twenty thousand men dead on the field.‡ The loss

* Of 40,000, who were in the city of Avaricum, scarce 800 survived. Caes. Bel. Gal. vii. 28.

† Le Sage mentions the number, as 300,000. See Atlas Historique, &c.

‡One hundred thousand were massacred at the seige of Philopolis, Gibbon, I. 399. The Persians lost 30,000 at the seige of Amida, Gib. III. 209.

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sustained by the enemy, was probably greater. Of the number killed in the dreadful battle of Borodino, fresh in the minds of all present, accounts essentially vary. The mean number is fifty thousand.

But, ceasing to confine our attention to a single battle, we may extend it to the whole Russian campaign. Of the four hundred thousand warriors, who had crossed the Niemen, scarcely twenty thousand men returned. Of the Italian troops, commanded by the Viceroy, not more than eight hundred survived.

The savage features of war are distinctly seen, when we contemplate the besieging of towns and strongly fortified places. While the siege is maintained, there are no intervals, as to the excitement and terror. There is perpetually a fearful anticipation of the final result. To increase this evil, and to render it the more insupportable, the body may be worn down with fatigue, and perhaps exhausted by famine. So extreme is sometimes the hunger of the besieged, that human flesh, nay, the flesh of friends and children has been consumed for food. At the siege of Paris, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, human bones were pulverized and used for bread. In view of what the besieged endure, and what they anticipate, it will hardly create surprise, that some, reduced to desperation by their sufferings and their prospects, have, by voluntary death, anticipated both the course of nature, and the violence of their invaders. Accordingly, after the destruction of Jerusalem, certain Jews, who took refuge in the castle of Masada, being closely besieged by the Romans, at the persuasion of their leader, first murdered their wives and children; then they slew one another, till but one remained, who, having set fire to the castle, stabbed himself. Something similar to this occurred in Spain, during the second Punic war. The inhabitants of Saguntum, that they might not fall into the hands of the Carthaginian army, burnt themselves, with their houses and all their effects. When Trajan was engaged in his second war with the Dacians, in one of their cities, besieged by the Romans, the men, despairing of its longer defence, having slain their wives and chil-

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dren, secretly withdrew to a large cavern in the mountains. There, unable to sustain or defend themselves, they procured a large quantity of poison; dissolved it in a caldron; when a few individuals were appointed to deal out the fatal portion to the crowds, who rushed eagerly round this fountain of death.

Should you ask why the inhabitants of a besieged town should be rendered desperate by the prospect of speedy capture, I beg leave to refer you to facts of no distant date,—to accounts of no uncertain authority. When the gates of Moscow had been forced in the late war, so horrid were the outrages, committed on the persons of all whom they discovered, "that fathers, desperate to save their children from pollution, would set fire to their place of refuge, and find a surer asylum in its flames." Nothing, says Labaume, a French officer, present on the occasion, could equal the anguish, which absorbed every feeling heart, and which increased in the dead of night, by the cries of the miserable victims, who were savagely murdered, and by the screams of defenceless females, who vainly fled for protection to their weeping mothers.

In view of that immense variety of sufferings, which results from war, imagination, fatigued and distracted, acknowledges the inadequacy of her powers. Your conceptions may, however, be in some measure aided, by reflecting on the alarming apprehensions, which, but a few years since, were entertained for this town, for your own families, and your own persons. Had invasion, which was not improbable, actually occurred; had it issued in capture and temporary subjugation, which was, doubtless, far within the limits of possibility, in your families and dwelling places, now the abodes of domestic tranquillity, scenes of wanton waste and desolation might have been exhibited, acts of barbarity and gross licentiousness might have been perpetrated. But if war in our own country has never appeared in its full array of horrors, it must not be forgotten that thousands, to whom it has thus appeared, have felt, no less than we, attachment to life, fears of violent death, love to their fami-

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lies and altars, sensibility to the sufferings, or dishonor, of their parents, their wives, and their children.

In contemplation of the facts, which have now been mentioned, every person, possessing feelings, either of religion or humanity, is led to inquire, whether the future is to resemble the past; whether the earth is doomed to continue through all ages, the theatre of national wars; whether, as the human mind is cultivated, and as science and the arts are carried to greater perfection, both will be employed in devising new instruments and methods for destroying the hopes, disturbing the enjoyments, consuming the habitations, and wasting the lives of men. In other words, Shall the sword devour forever?

To answer this question will now be attempted. I take it for granted, that all, to whom I am speaking, believe the Christian religion; and believe further, that Almighty God does not want the power to execute his promises and determinations. On these promises it is no difficult matter to establish a conclusion, highly favorable to the best feelings and hopes of mankind.

I. The empire of Christ, by which I mean the diffusion and effects of the Christian religion, shall be universal: All kings shall bow down before him; yea, all nations shall serve him. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, from the river to the ends of the earth.—The stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, as seen in Nebuchadnezzar's vision, itself became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

This kingdom shall be, not only universal, but perpetual: The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, saith the prophet Daniel, which shall never be destroyed.—The kingdoms of this world, said the great voices in heaven, shall become the kingdoms of our God, and he shall reign forever and ever.—I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn unto David may servant: his seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Considering the character of him, who is placed at the head of this empire, namely, the Prince of Peace, its mild and pacific nature was to have been presumed. But testimony, as to this

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point, is explicit and satisfactory: In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb: the leopard shall lie down with the kid: and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

My hearers, I ask you to entertain no visionary expectations, no dreams of distempered fancy. But I take the liberty of appealing to you, whether a state of greater peace, order, and virtue, may not be confidently predicted, without credulity, or rashness? Do men ever expect, or require, on the most important subjects, better evidence, on which to rest their opinions, than that which has now been exhibited? Is there any peculiar ambiguity in those passages of Scripture, which have now been cited? Of that variety of figures, which they embrace, is the general import questionable? If then the Scriptures are of divine origin, and do contain promises of universal and perpetual peace on earth, we are not only permitted, but required to believe, that the time is coming, when wars shall no longer disturb the nations. God is not a man that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? But in the present instance, our faith is confirmed, by seeing the manner in which the event foretold shall be accomplished. There is an obvious connexion between the influence of Christianity and the annihilation of war. No philosophical statesman can attribute war to any other cause,

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than that, which has been assigned to it by the pen of inspiration. Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not hence even of your lusts, that war in your members? Had the king of Assyria imbibed a spirit similar to that which Christianity inculcates, would he have boasted, saying: I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and have put down the inhabitants as a valiant man? Had the States of Greece cordially imbibed a religion like that of Jesus, should we ever have heard of a Peloponnesian war? Had the son of Philip embraced such a religion, would he have invaded Scythia, and crossed the Indus? Had Rome, whether under kings, consuls, or emperors, known the doctrines of Him, who spake from heaven, and received the truth in the love of it, would she have been perpetually engaged in wars of conquest and ambition? Or if Europe, for the last twenty years, had been really, as she was nominally, Christian, would the whole earth and ocean have resounded with the noise of her battles? We do not attempt to maintain, that there is any power in the Christian name, which will frighten from the earth the demon of war. Christianity will render communities good and pacific, so far only, as they adopt its principles, submit to its restraints, and obey its injunctions.

If any person doubts that the tendency of this religion corresponds with the proclamation, by which angels announced the advent of its author;—if any one doubts that its genuine influence is to promote "peace on earth, and good will towards men," he may readily obtain satisfaction by consulting the doctrines of Christ, or the writings of his inspired apostles: Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.—Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him;

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if he thirst, give him drink.—Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good. Christianity strikes at the root of angry contention; its object is to seize upon the heart. Streams are rendered salutary, if you can first extract from the fountain its deadly qualities.

But is there any thing, you may ask, in the present state or aspect of the world, which indicates the approach of better days? May tranquillity among the nations be more rationally anticipated, at present, than at any former period? Doubtless it may. The world exhibits many symptoms of moral convalescence. The Christian religion has become an object of peculiar interest, in the Christian world. Believers in this religion have recently begun to feel, with a sensibility, hitherto unknown, both their privileges and their obligations. As they attempt to open the eyes of the heathen, their own visual perception becomes more clear and distinct. In whatever nation, community, or family, much effort is made to teach pagans the way of salvation, some alteration for the better will be experienced in its own religious knowledge, in its moral habits and character. But we have shown that as the knowledge and spirit of Christianity are diffused, the temper and practices of men become more pacific, reason is more regarded, and the passions of the human heart, if not subdued, are chastened and restrained.

It is known to most of my hearers, that on the 26th of September, 1815, was formed at Paris, a confederation, denominated the Holy League, between the emperors of Austria and Russia, and the king of Prussia. These princes declare solemnly, "that the present act has no other object than to show in the face of the universe, their unwavering determination to adopt for the rule of their conduct, both in the administration of their respective States, and in their political relations with every other government, the precepts of this holy religion, the precepts of justice, of charity, and of peace." Other powers have since, it appears, acceded to this solemn covenant.

In whatever view the matter is contemplated, it is impossible not to consider this coalition among the most extraordinary and

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interesting occurrences, of modern times. What is the real character of these potentates, in respect to religion, cannot be determined by a public document of this kind. But that they wish to be considered by their respective subjects, and by the world, as the patrons of Christianity, there can be no doubt. To maintain this character, they will, at least, discountenance infidelity, and make provision, that their subjects may enjoy the advantages of religious instruction. In this way, kings do become nursing fathers to the church. In this way is the gospel honored in the view of men, its doctrines become more known, and its precepts more regarded. But, in this imperial covenant, there is not only an express and solemn recognition of Christianity in general; but its pacific principles are distinctly specified: The precepts of justice, of charity and peace.

Another consideration, well calculated to animate the friends of peace, is the unexpected success, with which, at the present day, God sees fit to crown almost every effort, made for purposes of benevolence or piety. Whether we contemplate societies, whose object is to employ missionaries, to distribute the Scriptures, or pamphlets of moral and religious tendency; whether we contemplate the education of heathen youth, either in their own countries, or in ours; or confine our views to Sunday and charity schools, we clearly perceive that the blessing of God surpasses the calculations of men: A little one becomes a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. There is a handful of corn in the earth, on the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof is seen to shake like Lebanon.

But since Christianity is itself a religion of peace, the very object which this society professes to have in view, is secured, so far as Christianity gains influence; why then, it may be asked, should societies be instituted distinctly for this purpose? I observe, in reply, it is doubtless true, that every genuine Christian does something towards effecting the design for which these societies are formed. We view every person of this description, as our friend and coadjutor. So is every Christian, acting in character, a friend to all benevolent institutions; but this does

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not render the existence of such institutions unnecessary. Every Christian, acting in character, is a friend to humanity, to justice, and rational freedom, and therefore an enemy to the slave trade. But unless abolition societies had been formed, that most unrighteous traffic might have continued to the end of the world. Something was necessary to awaken sensibility, and to fix the public attention.

My hearers will have the goodness to remark, that we make no high pretensions. Knowing that our influence is neither weighty nor extensive, our claims and expectations are of a chastened and moderate kind. We are not, I hope, insensible that all our sufficiency is of God,—that we have no strength, nor wisdom, nor resolution, but what we derive from him. To him, therefore, we would daily address the poet's prayer, and say,

> "From Thee is all that soothes the life of man,
> His high endeavors, and his glad success,
> His strength to suffer, and his will to serve."

This society and others, formed for the same object, both in this country and in Europe, may now be compared to light clouds, far distant from each other, and "no bigger than a man's hand." It is for divine wisdom to determine, whether these clouds shall be speedily attenuated and dissolved; or whether they shall be thickened and enlarged, and, uniting with others, yet to be formed in the intermediate spaces, shall cover all the heavens, and shall distil "the dew of Hermon; the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion."

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SERMON XIII.

TRUE SOURCES OF NATIONAL PROSPERITY.*

Isaiah, 33: 6.—Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation; The fear of the Lord is his treasure.

This chapter begins with an elegant apostrophe to Sennacherib, king of Assyria, reproaching him as the ambitious and unprovoked disturber of the peace of nations. The prophet next makes a devout address to Jehovah, expressing confidence in the divine government, and hope of the delivery and security of his people, notwithstanding the menaces of an insolent and imperious adversary.

The text is thought to be directed to Hezekiah, then the monarch of Judah, and is thus rendered by Bishop Lowth:

Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times; the possession of continued salvation; the fear of Jehovah, this shall be thy treasure.

The terms, *wisdom and fear of God*, as frequently used in Scripture, are synonymous. *The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.* But, as both occur in our text, it is rational to conclude, that by the latter, is signified an ability to accomplish desirable ends, by a judicious choice and arrangement of means. This ability, though often found in connexion with knowledge and piety, is not to be confounded with either. The *fear of God* directs men to aim at the purest and noblest ends. For the accomplishment of these, *wisdom* makes a selection from those various means, which *knowledge* has provided.

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* Preached at the Annual Election, Mass. May, 1814.

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The doctrine inculcated by our text is, therefore, that *the permanent prosperity of a nation is best secured by a union of knowledge, wisdom, and the fear of God.*

After having endeavored to illustrate this proposition, we shall consider, in what way these qualities can be most effectually promoted.

To elucidate the proposition, we observe, *first*, that by *science*, a nation is enabled to profit by the advantages of its natural situation. It avails little, that the soil of a country is rich, if the art of cultivation is unknown to the inhabitants. It avails nothing, that her shores are capable of being connected with every climate, through the medium of intervening seas or oceans, while science has never taught the construction of vessels, nor the art of directing them. Without this knowledge, there is comparatively little use in the rivers, by which a country is intersected; nor can the advantages of them be fully realized, till all vincible obstacles to navigation are actually overcome, and neighboring streams are made to unite their waters.

The fearful train of disorders, which makes such extensive and perpetual devastation on the happiness and life of man, is found capable of being arrested or enfeebled by the use of these mineral or vegetable substances, which the liberality of nature produces; but of which it is the province of science to discover the virtues, and the just application. It is in vain, that remedies are provided for human sufferings, or sustenance for human life, while the plants or minerals, which contain them, are permitted to remain undistinguished in the bosom of the forest, or buried beneath the surface of the earth. How inexpressibly might the sum of human misery have been lessened, had the science of medicine, among all the nations of antiquity, been advanced to its present state! What enormous waste of life has been annually made for many centuries, by a disorder, the easy prevention of which is matter of recent discovery! The sciences of chemistry and mineralogy, lately introduced into our country, and now cultivated with so much ardor and success, cannot fail, by their influence on medicine, agriculture and the arts, to pro-

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duce consequences of great national importance. The nature of man on the one side, and of soils and climates on the other, remains the same in every age. It is knowledge—it is cultivation that produces the change. To this are we to ascribe it, that in our own country, where, two centuries ago, wild beasts and savages were contending for the empire of an unmeasured desert, there are now civil institutions, commerce, cities, arts, letters, religion, and all the charities of social and domestic life.

Secondly—in wisdom and knowledge is implied a right understanding of the nature and design of civil society. A community possessing these qualities, will consider government as a benevolent institution, resulting from the social nature of man, and conducive not less to his liberty, than to his security. They will adopt a form of government, not only good in itself, but adapted to the local and relative situation of their country, and to their own genius and character. Whatever constitution may be preferred, they will never accede to the doctrine, that the people were made for their rulers; but will rather consider the latter as the honored depositaries of power, originally inherent in the people, and voluntarily relinquished by them, on condition of its being used for their benefit. They will, by consequence, believe themselves in possession of a right, either to resume the power, or else to demand the accomplishment of the conditions, on which it was conferred.

Thirdly—whatever civil compact they may see fit to adopt, an enlightened people will not trust themselves to calculate, with minuteness and confidence, the greatest degree of political prosperity that may be enjoyed, nor the least degree of restraint that may be necessary. It will not escape them, that no human foresight can extend to all emergencies, which a series of years may produce; and that time may develope, in any political constitution, traits, either more or less valuable, than were apparent to its original authors. It is a well known truth in mechanics, that the actual and theoretical powers of a machine will never coincide. Through the flexibility of one part, the rigidity of another, and the roughness of a third, the result may disappoint

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those fond hopes, which seemed to rest on the firm ground of mathematical calculation. The judicious artist will not, however, on this account, be willing to reject, as worthless, a structure of splendid and complicated mechanism, of solid materials, in the formation of which, much labor, experience and ingenuity have been employed.

It is a remark, not less important because frequently made, that an indifferent constitution may be so administered, as to render a nation happy, and that, without a good administration, the best political institutions will fail of accomplishing that purpose. Now, as the manner in which government will be administered in any nation, can never be foreseen, a discerning people will not confidently anticipate, as their perpetual portion, the highest degree of prosperity which their form of government seems calculated to secure. Nor will they fix their eyes so intensely on the evils which may be felt at any period, as to forget the imperfection of all human establishments, and that, under a new form of government, may be concealed important disadvantages, which experience alone can bring to light. Rejecting alike the character of inconstancy, turbulence, and despondency, they will neither tamely yield to abuses, nor subvert their political institutions on account of them.

Fourthly—as an enlightened people will know how to value their rights, they will place those in office, who, by their ability, knowledge, and integrity, are entitled to such distinction. To obtain their suffrages, it will not be enough, that a man professes his attachment to order, religion, or liberty. He must have more solid ground, on which to establish his claims to public favor. In knowledge and wisdom is doubtless implied a spirit of discernment. To enjoy the confidence of a wise people, there must therefore be a consistency of character, a uniform regard to moral principle and the public good. They will clearly perceive, that the civil interests of millions cannot be secure in the hands of men, who, in the more confined circle of common intercourse, are selfish, rapacious, or aspiring.

An enlightened regard to self-interest and a religious sense of

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responsibility, will in this case, lead to the same practical result. In exercising the right of freemen, the man of religion experiences no conflict between his duty and his inclination. Towards the dishonest, profane, ambitious and profligate, he feels

"The strong antipathy of good to bad."

He has no wish to behold, arrayed in robes of office, men, whose largest views do not extend beyond the limits of mortal life, and whose deportment and conversation indicate neither love nor reverence for the Author of their being.

In very popular governments, where the elective franchise is widely extended, it is, doubtless, impossible that candidates for public office should be personally known to all, whose suffrages they receive. How generally soever knowledge is diffused, all the members of a large State cannot be brought within the sphere of mutual observation. In this case, resort must be had to the best sources of information. But it should not be forgotten, that a portion of the same intelligence and virtue, required in rulers, is necessary in giving information concerning candidates. An honest and well-informed freeman will rely on none but honest and well-informed witnesses.

Fifthly—a nation distinguished by a union of wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God, is morally certain of having its government well administered, not only for the reason just assigned, but because the tone of morals, existing in such a nation, will operate as a powerful restraint, if, by any casualty or deep dissimulation, persons of yielding virtue should be placed in office.

Public opinion constitutes a tribunal, which few men, and least of all, those who are in pursuit of popular favor, will dare to set at defiance. It is scarcely possible, that a people, truly wise and virtuous, should have a government badly administered. Whenever the majority of a community complain of their rulers, they implicitly utter reproaches against themselves, for having placed their destiny in the hands of men, with whom it is insecure. If their reproaches are long continued, it is good proof that their own morals exhibit no very striking contrast

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with the morals of those whose profligacy they condemn. In popular governments, the virtues and vices of rulers must flourish or wither with those of the people.

Again. A union of wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God, will contribute to the prosperity of a nation by increasing its power.

That a nation, degenerate in its morals, may, however, be formidable by its policy and physical strength, is not to be questioned. But, if ignorance is joined to the want of virtue, we cannot doubt, that its imbecility will be equal to its wretchedness. Let the same nation become both well-informed and virtuous, and the augmentation of power will be incredible. In a wise and virtuous State, the citizens will cherish mutual confidence. This confidence will be a bond of union, not only between the people and their government, but between the different orders and members of the community. In such a State, rulers will act, not for themselves, but for the nation; nor will the people indulge a spirit of restless innovation, murmuring, or faction.

Virtue, in a society, says a profound writer,* "has a tendency to procure superiority and additional power, whether this power be considered as the means of security from opposite power, or of obtaining other advantages. And it has this tendency by rendering public good both an object and an end to every member of the society; by putting every one upon consideration and diligence, recollection and self-government, both in order to see what is the most effectual method, and also in order to perform their proper part for obtaining and preserving it; by uniting a society within itself, and so increasing its strength; and what is particularly to be mentioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. Power in society, by being under the direction of virtue, naturally increases, and has a necessary tendency to prevail over opposite power, not under the direction of it, in like manner, as power, by being under the direction of reason, increases, and has a tendency to prevail, over brute force."

* Bishop Butler.

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A state of things is here supposed, it may be objected, which is wholly ideal; since the world, from its commencement, has produced nothing resembling it. This is, indeed, true. But, if it is true, that a State would be extremely powerful, were it entirely virtuous, its power must, by consequence, be proportionate to its virtue.

A nation, but faintly resembling that which has been imagined, would, indeed, be far less than others likely to experience civil discord and foreign wars. Without cool deliberation, and a solemn conviction of responsibility, it would not gird on the harness. But, proceeding with reluctance, and under the impulse of duty, it would, if circumstances should not only justify, but require the measure, act with the more determined valor. Like the judgments of heaven, its displeasure would be slow and righteous, but irresistible: The people that do know their God, shall be strong and do exploits.

Further. Wisdom and virtue tend directly to the stability of a government, as they will prevent both the necessity and the general desire of a revolution. The necessity of such an event, in any nation, implies a high degree of corruption in its rulers. The desire without the necessity indicates, with no less certainty, a depraved, restless, and turbulent people. It is evident, that a moral and enlightened people will not be factious; nor will an administration of this character be oppressive. It is a melancholy and mortifying truth, that all human things tend to degeneracy. To check this tendency, in any political establishment, knowledge, generally diffused and actively employed, in connexion with a religious regard to the public welfare, may be effectual. Moderate evils, not easily remedied, will be patiently endured. Tranquillity and prosperity may thus be the growth of ages and centuries. But, where there is not enough either of knowledge or moral principle to discover or correct abuses, as they occur, the mass, by constant accretions, will become enormous, and produce eventually the atrocities and sufferings of a revolution.

A well-informed people know the advantages of the civil,

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compared with the savage state. They know that where there is civil society, there must be law, and that law implies restraint. They will consider partial restraint, as a moderate price, at which to purchase the rich blessings of order and safety. From a religious people, civil government, so far as it is of a moral nature, can never incur opposition. The restraints of morality they are bound to observe by stronger obligations, than those which arise from any human authority. On their hearts the works of a divine law are deeply inscribed. They abstain from moral disorder, out of regard to this law, which extends equally to the savage and the social state; to every condition indeed, and to every part of the universe, where there are human, or even intelligent beings.

Knowledge and wisdom tend no less to the stability of a government, by opposing despotism, than by avoiding anarchy. Where the minds of a nation are left free, an arbitrary government can never be established. While the spirit of a people is unsubdued, by which I mean, when it is under no confinement, but that which arises from reason and religion, obstacles, numerous and powerful, will be planted in the road of an aspiring despot.* There is no communion—there is no congeniality between that intellectual and moral elevation, implied in the character of a people, distinguished for knowledge and the fear of God, and that ignorance, corruption, and debasement, involved in quietly surrendering to human caprice, those rights which our Creator designed, as the unalienable accompaniments of a rational nature.

To illustrate and exemplify these remarks, we need only refer to the early history of our own country. Those illustrious men, who, under God, directed the earlier destinies of New-England, were distinguished for the character, of which we have been speaking. They were equally remarkable for their love of lib-

* The ancient Greeks were so fully convinced of this, that the inhabitants of Mitylene, having gradually subjected some of their allies, who had revolted, forbade them to give any instruction to their children.—*Æliani Hist. Var. L.* 7. 15.

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erty, and their hatred of anarchy and misrule. They could, without complaint, forego the indulgences and elegances of life; they could look unappalled on a vast, stormy, unfrequented ocean; they could plant themselves and their families, in a wilderness rendered hideous by every danger; they could submit, with invincible fortitude, to toils and privations;—but their noble minds could not endure the spirit of civil and religious bondage. How well they understood both the rights of the people, and the rights of government, appears from the following words of one of their chief magistrates.* "There is a liberty of corrupt nature, which is inconsistent with authority, impatient of restraint, and the grand enemy of truth and peace; and all the ordinances of God are bent against it. But there is a civil, moral, federal liberty, which consists in every one's enjoying his property, and having the benefit of the laws of his country, a liberty for that only, which is just and good; for this liberty you are to stand for your lives."

The fear of God tends to the stability of a nation, by ensuring the divine protection. If no human being either enters the world or leaves it; if no plant of the field either vegetates or decays; if no sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father, can all the parts of that vast and complicated machine, denominated a nation, continue their relative positions, and discharge their various functions without the same counsel and agency? All nations are before him as nothing; they are accounted as less than nothing and vanity. At what time I shall speak, saith Jehovah, concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down and destroy it, if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil, which I thought to do unto them. And at what time I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

This language expresses not merely the manner, in which God dealt with the Jewish nation, over which he maintained a

* Governor Winthrop.

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government peculiarly retributive; but the course of his providence in general. There are two ways, in which these declarations are rendered effectual. In the first place, such is the divine constitution, that vice brings immediate punishment to a State, by rendering it discordant and feeble. Such is the essential and immutable nature of vice, as to blast the best hopes of society, and to weaken the bonds, by which it is held together. Virtue, we have seen, tends to union, strength and harmony. It is obvious, therefore, that God protects an upright nation, by its uprightness, and demolishes and ruins an immoral nation by its profligacy.

In the second place, it should be considered, that the prayers of the righteous come up as a memorial before God. This sentiment is not peculiar to revelation, but may be considered, as universal among those who believe in a superintending Providence. God hath never said to the seed of Jacob, "seek ye me in vain." But, that the prayers of a nation may be heard and graciously answered, it is necessary that they may be offered with uprightness of character. If the Lord will not hear an individual who regards iniquity in his heart, neither will he accept the sacrifices of a vicious community. Agreeably to this, when the kingdom of Judah had become inattentive to the moral requirements of God, they were not encouraged to expect any favorable answer to their prayers: When ye spread forth your hands, saith Jehovah, I will hide mine eyes from you. When ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood.

If national prosperity is the sum of happiness enjoyed in a nation, it evidently depends on something more, than either the constitution of government, or what is strictly comprehended in the administration of it. Where both of these are good, there is, indeed, a strong presumption, that the people will be happy. Still it is not certain. No inconsiderable part of the real worth of our earthly existence consists in the safety and purity of domestic intercourse. Were all the happiness, hence resulting, destroyed, it is, at least, questionable, whether the remaining would be the better part. Now, though a bad government is

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likely to contaminate the mass of a nation, and infuse a kind of pestilence into the intercourse of neighbors, and even of individuals belonging to the same family; yet that state of happiness, which is the opposite of this, will not necessarily result even from a union of good laws and good rulers. In order to this, there must be general knowledge, but especially a high sense of moral obligation. While the ties of morality cannot be made to fasten on the conscience, social intercourse will be rendered precarious by falsehood and selfishness; friends will be perfidious; neighbors will be unkind and contentious; and all the joys of domestic life will be embittered. Knowledge, however salutary in conjunction with correct moral feelings, is, without them, wholly inadequate to diffuse either happiness or safety through the more private departments of life.

In the time of Pericles, Greece was not happy, because there was nothing in her religion, which could operate, as a principle of moral life.* And Rome became dissolute, because she received from Athens, at the same time, both her literature and her manners.† In the age of Julius and of Augustus, both public and private vices had become enormous, and extensively propagated. Such likewise was the state of the Jews, when, in the midst of good instruction, they rejected the fear of Jehovah. The want of religious feeling was apparent in all the business and intercourse of life. Every thing was gloomy and full of danger: Take heed, every one of his neighbor, and trust not to any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders. They have taught their tongues to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.‡

From all which precedes, it has become sufficiently obvious that, in order to experience the full effects of the best political institutions, a previous foundation must be laid in the minds of those who compose the state; and that wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of God, are the precious materials, of which this foun-

* Mitford's Hist. of Greece, Vol. IV. 432.

† Kennet's Rom. Ant.

‡ Jer. 9: 4, 5.

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dation is to be formed. The promotion of these will, therefore, demand the attention of all the enlightened members of the State, but especially of those concerned in its government. If it is important to enact laws for the suppression of vice, it is undeniably more important to prevent or exterminate, if possible, those corrupt propensions, which lead to it. The police officers of a distempered city are but ill employed in directing men to fumigate the streets and markets, if no care be taken to clear the ground and purify the atmosphere, from which the contagion is communicated.

Those intellectual and moral qualities, so essential to the permanent prosperity of a State, can be promoted extensively in no other way, than by education, early begun and judiciously prosecuted. The youth in a community have, long since, been compared to the spring. The loss of these would be like striking out from the year, the vernal months. If there be no vegetation in the opening year, what shall support life during the time of autumn and winter? Or what if there be a luxuriant vegetation, but no salutary or nourishing plant? What if "thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockles instead of barley?"

That education may do much, both for the intellectual and moral improvement of a nation, cannot be called in question. If the Spartan discipline was found adequate to its object, during many centuries, though it counteracted some of the strongest affections of our natures; if parental, filial and even conjugal tenderness could be extinguished or smothered under a political constitution, which formed but one family, of a whole State, what might not be done by pursuing, with perseverance, a plan of education, concerted with just views of the human character, and under the influence of that glorious light, which Christianity has shed on the destiny of man!

The active powers of the soul must either be suppressed or directed. If they are suppressed, their possessor loses, in a considerable degree, his rank in the moral world. If they are not suppressed, they must be directed by knowledge and moral principle.

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The importance of early instruction was felt by the wisest nations of antiquity: "What," says an author,* speaking in the name of the Grecian sages, and profoundly versed in their writings, "What are the solid foundations of the tranquillity and happiness of States? Not the laws, which dispense the rewards and punishments; but the public voice, when it makes an exact retribution of contempt and esteem. The laws, in themselves impotent, borrow their power solely from manners. Hence results, in every government, the indispensable necessity of attending to the education of children, as an essential object, of training them up in the spirit and love of the constitution, in the simplicity of ancient times; in a word, in the principles which ought ever after to regulate their virtues, their opinions, their sentiments, and their behavior. All, who have meditated on the art of government, have been convinced that the fate of empires, depended on the education given to youth."

This subject did not escape the notice of the Athenian legislator. Solon enacted a number of laws, relating particularly to education. In them he specified both the time, at which youth should receive public lessons, and the character and talents of the masters, who should instruct them. One of the Courts of Justice was to superintend the observance of these regulations.†

At Sparta, it is well known that education was every thing. Children were scarcely introduced into the world, when they were subject to a course of discipline, applied equally to the mind and the body. Lycurgus would have his laws engraved on the hearts of the citizens; and, to effect this, he endeavored so to direct the education of youth, that his institutions might be to them, as a law of nature.‡

"In the rising ages of Rome," says the learned Kennet, "while their primitive integrity and virtue flourished, the training up of youth was a most sacred duty. But, in the looser

*Abbé Barthelemi. Travels of Anacharsis III. 329.

† Trav. of Anacharsis, Vol. 62.—Mitford's Hist. of Greece, Vol. I. 440.

‡ Ibid. 319.

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times of the empire, the shameful negligence of parents and instructors, with its necessary consequence, the corruption and decay of morality and good letters, struck a great blow towards dissolving that glorious fabric."*

The same general principle is distinctly recognized in that constitution, which was divinely bestowed on the Jewish nation: These words, which I command thee this day, saith Moses, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.†

If such be the importance of education, may I not be indulged for a few moments, in considering the most obvious ways, in which it may be promoted?

At the head of these, we cannot hesitate to place parental or domestic instruction. In his children, the parent beholds those, who are to become members of the State, and to act, in a sphere of greater or less extent, on its political and moral interests. He is forming their character at an age, when their dependence is absolute, and resistance impossible. The first development of the mind is made under the domestic roof, and in the presence of those, who are most interested to observe it. It depends on the knowledge and fidelity of parents, whether their children shall be seasonably taught the being, perfections, and government of God, or be permitted to spend the earlier part of their existence in ignorance or contempt of him, from whom they received it. On the same knowledge and fidelity in parents will it depend, whether the first notions which children form of the Supreme Being, shall coincide with reason and Scripture, or be the monstrous birth of a distempered imagination;

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* Juvenal gives testimony to the same effect:

"Dii majorum umbris tenuem, et sine pondere terram,
Spirantesque crocos, et in urnam perpetuum ver,
Qui praeceptorem sancti voluere parentis
Esse loco."

† Deut. 6: 6.

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whether the more gentle affections shall be cultivated, or the wilder passions be permitted to rage and mingle in defiance of restraint, either from prudence or religion.

Every family is a nation in embryo. Civil society originally consisted of families; and so it does still. By forming habits of obedience, intercourse, and beneficence, while under parental government, young persons become qualified to move in a more enlarged sphere, and to discharge duties of more extensive importance. In this manner are now forming throughout this Commonwealth, a set of mechanics, a yeomanry, military characters, merchants, divines, legislators, and judges; all those, in fine, who shall compose the body politic, when we, who are now living, shall be covered with the clods of the valley.

In view of this subject, I am irresistibly led to contemplate the primitive character of New-England. In relation to those, who, by planting civilization and religion on these shores, transmitted to us this fair inheritance, the language of inspiration may be well used: When thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown, Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase. In almost every dwelling was there both an altar and a church: Then began men to call on the name of the Lord. The child was early engaged in the worship of Jehovah, to whom he had been consecrated by a Christian ordinance. From the lips of maternal piety and love, he imbibed the lessons of heavenly wisdom. By a father's authority, guided and softened by the spirit of religion, his aberrations were reclaimed, and virtuous habits were aided and confirmed. It was a scene which angels delighted to witness! The Bible, the Sabbath, and the sanctuary, were objects not only of veneration, but of affection. Together with the love of truth and probity, they formed a strong attachment to rational freedom; a character, remarkable for solidity, decision, and independence. They knew both how to appreciate their rights and to defend them. They knew what was expected from children, of whose parents it could be emphatically said, that they "feared God, and feared nothing else."

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2. Next in importance to family instruction, is that of common schools. No friend of his country can ever be indifferent to this source of information. Large rivers may be of great utility in fertilizing, within certain limits, the adjacent fields. But the country in general is to be enriched and moistened by smaller streams. By the institution of schools, knowledge is diffused over a whole nation. Its streams are carried to every house, and to every cottage. They may be tasted alike by children of wealthy, and by those of indigent parents. Nothing can be more consistent with republican principles, nothing more essential to such a government, than this equal and universal extension of knowledge. To a benevolent mind it is highly gratifying to reflect, that in a large community, there should be scarcely a child under the hard necessity of passing through life in profound ignorance. No man is in a situation so elevated, as to justify an inattention to such an object.

The advantages resulting to the public from school education, will obviously depend much not only on the knowledge, but also on the morals of those, who are employed to give instruction. Parents can scarcely do their children a more material injury, than to place them under the care of a profane, intemperate or licentious teacher.

3. Academies, or schools of a public nature are useful, just in proportion to the fidelity and accuracy with which they teach the principles of morality, science, and classical literature. And perhaps it may deserve the attention of an enlightened legislature, to determine, whether a moderate number of these establishments, with endowments competent steadily to maintain able instructors, would not as effectually subserve the interests of knowledge, as to give to a great number an existence, painful, precarious, and intermitting.

4. In the next particular we have doubtless been anticipated. The happy consequences resulting to society from more extensive literary establishments such as colleges and universities, have been so generally observed, as to render it unnecessary to offer either detail or proof. It has been a thousand times mentioned

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and ought never to be forgotten, that our ancestors were the friends of learning, as well as of liberty and religion. The university in this vicinity, originally dedicated "to Christ and the church,"* stands as a durable monument of the enlarged views entertained by the fathers of New England. How well they judged as to the influence of knowledge, in giving stability both to the church and the Commonwealth, will appear doubtful to no one, who examines the long list of civilians, military commanders, or religious instructors, who, in different periods of our country, have defended its liberties, formed its political constitutions, or corrected its sentiments and morals. Of these illustrious names, he will find a large proportion in the catalogues of our older seminaries.

These views, I well know, are familiar to the audience, which I have the honor to address; to a legislature especially, which, recently by an act of noble munificence, gave public evidence of the interest, which it feels in the "advancement of literature, piety, morality, and the useful arts and sciences."†

But, of all kinds of knowledge, none is so important to human beings, as that, which relates to God, to their own present duty, and future prospects. No instructions are like his, who spake from heaven. Wherever the gospel is preached with clearness, and with a becoming mixture of zeal and knowledge, the eternal difference between virtue and vice is openly displayed; sensibility of conscience is preserved, and its decisions re-

* The motto on the seal of Harvard College is *Christo et Ecclesiae.*

† The Legislature of this commonwealth, at their last session, passed an act, granting and appropriating, for ten years, the tax, which the President, and Directors, and Company of the Massachusetts Bank are and shall be liable to pay to the Commonwealth, in the following manner, viz: ten sixteenths to Harvard College, three sixteenths to Williams College, and three sixteenths to Bowdoin College. One fourth, at least, of this sum is to be appropriated, according to the judgment of the respective corporations of said colleges, for the benefit of such students, as may apply therefor.—It is highly honorable to the Legislature, that this act passed both houses without opposition.

Quid munus reipublicae majus, meliusve afferre possumus, quam si juventutem docemus, et bene erudimus?

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spected; the general tone of morals is raised; and vice if not suppressed, is constrained to avoid observation and seek retirement.

In Christianity, the mind is assailed by motives, such as could not be drawn either from the stores of philosophy or from any other system of religion. A world is here opened on the imagination, absolutely without bounds or limits. The rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice are declared, by the Son of God, to be of such duration, as accumulated ages and millions of ages cannot diminish. The objects of this retribution are human actions in connexion with motives and dispositions.—Nor, can it be, for a moment doubted, that the public preaching of such a religion throughout a nation, is calculated to arrest the progress of vice, to enliven moral feelings, to diffuse a general spirit of sobriety, and to create habits of deliberation, and religious forecast? But, if the advancement of good morals, by which the execution of laws is infinitely facilitated, be a fit subject of legislation, so must be every institution or practice, which most powerfully tends to such an issue. If ancient legislators were so thoroughly convinced of the value of religion in civil government, as to originate or countenance false pretences to Revelation, how much does prudence as well as duty require a Christian State to support a religion, which in truth descended from heaven.

It has now, we hope, been sufficiently shown, not only that the permanent prosperity of a nation is best secured by a union of knowledge, wisdom and the fear of God; but that the education of youth is, under divine Providence, the most powerful means of effecting this union.

In view of this subject, shall I be permitted briefly to address His Excellency, the chief magistrate of this Commonwealth?

At a crisis, when acknowledged talents, long experience in public affairs, unshaken integrity, conciliating and cautious manners, joined with decision of character, were qualities, infinitely important in one who should be selected to preside in our government, we recognize, with devout thankfulness, the

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gracious hand of Almighty God, in again directing the public attention to your Excellency, and in directing your Excellency to consider the voice of the public, as the indication of duty. We rejoice to witness, in the supreme Executive of our State government, a rich assemblage of those republican and Christian virtues, which shone with so benign a lustre, in the purer ages of our country.

In the midst of those scenes and duties, which are connected with an office so highly responsible; while there are a thousand interests to regard, and a thousand temptations to resist; while, on the one hand, there are solicitations to repel, and, on the other, provocations to pass by and forgive, your Excellency, perhaps, needs not to be reminded, that there is scarcely a poor man among your constituents, whose situation, in regard to spiritual improvement, is less favorable, than your own. We implore for your Excellency a large supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, that, when all human beings shall appear, as trembling suppliants, before the Divine Tribunal, it may be your glory, not that you have been frequently called to preside over a free State, but that, by divine grace, you have been enabled to "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God."

His Honor, the Lieutenant Governor, will please to accept our respectful congratulations, that the second office in the gift of the people, has been again bestowed on him, in testimony of their high regard for the virtues of integrity, public spirit, and patriotism.

Notwithstanding the length of this discourse, I do entreat the attention of the Council, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, to a subject, intimately connected with the welfare of this State, and of our common country. War is one of the severest calamities, by which the Sovereign of the universe dispenses punishment to guilty nations. The evils of our present condition are too sensibly felt by men of all descriptions and sentiments, to render a minute delineation of them, either expedient or necessary. As to their origin, it is attributed, by a portion of our citizens, to partial, feeble, and ill-judged policy

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in our national administration; by the rest, to an absolute necessity, resulting from the aggressions of a powerful and imperious nation. On this subject, it is not my present design to offer any opinion. I have no wish to add fuel to the flames of party zeal, which already rage with a heat so intense, as threatens to dissolve our political establishments. Wherever may exist the immediate occasion of our unhappy condition, the ultimate cause is to be sought in our national character. The spirit of vice has diffused a deadly contagion throughout every State in the union. The infection is not unknown in this northern extremity, once so pre-eminently the abode both of private and of public virtue. The holy Sabbaths of God are extensively violated by men of all conditions in life, and of all political creeds. As temptations to this sin have been recently multiplied, the evil has become enormous and intolerable. The habitual profanation of sacred things, but especially of the divine name and attributes, is as general as it is impious and demoralizing. The demon of intemperance is stalking through our country, wasting our property, consuming our health, and destroying our best hopes, both from objects of earth, and from those beyond the skies. The morals of men hang loosely about them, and are too frequently thrown off whenever an assault is made by individual or party interest.

On this subject, I make a respectful, but solemn appeal to the honored legislators of the Commonwealth. Do you believe, that any State, community, or nation can be powerful, tranquil, and permanently happy, if their morals are extensively depraved? Would not the most alarming depravation of morals result from a general disbelief of the Christian religion? Would the happiness of families, would property or life be secure in a nation of deists? If Christianity is the most powerful guardian of morals, are you not, as civilians, bound to give it your support and patronage? Do you, in the least, question whether the institution of the Sabbath has an extensive influence in bringing to the view of men their dependence on God, the extent and purity of his law, the soul's immortality, and a day of judg-

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ment? * Is it doubtful, whether that reverent regard, with which this day was treated by our ancestors, was nearly connected with those habits of integrity, industry, sobriety, and moderation, for which they were so remarkable? Have not the general profanation of God's name, and the inconsiderate use of that language, in which he has been pleased to express the sanctions of his law, a direct tendency to impair the influence of those sanctions, and to dissipate the fears of profligate men?

Probably there was never a time, since we became a nation, when the crime of perjury had become so frequent, as at present. This is the legitimate offspring of other sins, to which we have been long accustomed; and to those, who are acquainted with the human character, it can produce but little surprise. When the witness, the complainant, or the accused adds to his promise of uttering nothing but the truth, these words, *so help me God*, he does, indeed, imprecate on himself the divine anger, if his testimony should be designedly false. But imprecations of a similar import, he has used, perhaps, a thousand times without feeling his responsibility, or realizing the solemnity of an oath. That individual, therefore, especially if placed

* The disregard, with which the Sabbath was treated in France, a short time preceding the revolution, will appear from the following note:

"These various reflections are very necessary in the place, where I live, since, for a short time, laborers have been permitted to work, at Paris, of a Sunday. We see this publicly done at the new bridge, which is building over the Seine; as if a work of mere convenience was in such haste, that the laws should be dispensed with to accelerate its execution. The laborers, some will say, are glad to gain a day every week. Undoubtedly, because they see only the present instant, they have reason to think so; but it is the duty of government to consider, in a more comprehensive point of view, the interest of the people, of that part of society which is so blind, or so limited, in its calculation. And the church should examine also, if the sudden alteration of a practice so ancient, may not give rise to an idea, that the spirit of religion is growing feeble. FOR THE NATIONS, WHERE THIS SPIRIT IS BEST PRESERVED, HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR THE SABBATH."

Neckar on the Imp. of Rel. Opin. Chap. ix. note.

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in a commanding station, who swears profanely, or violates the Sabbath, does much towards demolishing the foundations, on which civil society is supported. He breaks up the fountains of the great deep; the waters will rush out from their caverns, and overflow the earth. Whoever may be the immediate authors of our present sufferings, certain it is, that in order to our obtaining the blessings of permanent and solid prosperity, a reformation must be effected in our national character.

The Greeks, with good reason, inveighed against the ambition of Philip. Nor with less reason were the patriots of Rome alarmed at the daring measures of Caesar. But neither did Philip nor Caesar impose a yoke on the necks of a free people. In both cases, the people were enslaved by their passions, and by the unrestrained depravity of the heart. Liberty was not immolated either at Chaeronea or Philippi. She had been long declining; and those places only witnessed her dying struggles.

It is the immutable purpose of God, that a people, destitute of moral principle, shall be neither free nor happy. We may, therefore, consider Jehovah, speaking to us, as he once spake to Israel: Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes. Cease to do evil and learn to do well. Them, that honor me, I will honor; and they, that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.

In making this appeal to the venerable guardians of the State, I do not suggest the idea of multiplying laws for the suppression of those vices, which have been mentioned. If the laws, now existing, were executed, the evil would soon be suppressed. If they can be executed, and are not, it is evident, where rest the responsibility and the guilt. But, if our national character has so degenerated, that magistrates would not be supported in executing the laws; if the torrent is so heavy and rapid, as to overwhelm the civil authority, then is immediate reformation our only hope. Considering the numbers, which compose this legislative body,—the talents, wealth, and character which it embraces, its influence, if concentrated on a particular object, would be incredibly powerful. There is scarcely a town or

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plantation in the Commonwealth, which is not here represented. That you have popularity and influence in your respective towns and districts, is evident from the places of honor, which you now hold. You are, therefore, the persons to engage in this work of reform. You may unquestionably do much. And, permit me to say, that when God gives means and ability, there is something, which he will require us to give in return; I mean an account of the manner in which we use them. Nothing, at present, is better understood, than systematical operation. Our political contentions have taught us to carry this art to high perfection. Let there be the same union of zeal and system to suppress vice, and to revive the habits, the spirit, and piety of our forefathers, which is discovered in bearing down a rival interest, and your names will be forever recorded, as the honored instruments of perpetuating the union, and of achieving the salvation and glory of your country.

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SERMON XIV.

MEANS OF PERPETUATING THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

ISAIAH 59: 21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit, that is upon thee, my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.

WHETHER these words relate to the Christian church in general, or only to that part of it, which shall hereafter be composed of converted Jews, is not entirely obvious. In either case, the promise which they contain, is made to God's professing people, and has reference to the prosperity of the church.

No man, accustomed to reflection, confines his attention to the present hour. Even if this world were the only theatre of human action, it would still be evident, that the scene in which we find ourselves, as it did not *commence*, so neither will it *terminate*, with our mortal existence. The succession of human beings will continue, with all their capacities for pleasure and pain, with all their native moral propensities either to virtue or vice. The condition of society, we know, admits of great diversity. Its actual state is, at one period, exceedingly different, as to order, happiness, and morals, from what it is at another. Should we, therefore, leave out of the account *our own descendants*, and the *consideration of another life*, it would still be difficult to avoid all solicitude for the generations yet to come. Even in the case supposed, something more than curiosity would lead us to inquire, what was likely to be the state of the world after our departure, and what the character and condition of our successors. But, when we contemplate ourselves, in the honorable,

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and interesting relation of *parents*, and consider, that the blood which is now confined, or was ever confined to our own veins, may flow hereafter in a thousand channels, and that the flame of life, when extinguished in these tabernacles, may be lighted up in successive generations, even until "the day when the Son of man shall be revealed;" when we reflect, moreover, that in this long series of rational beings, so nearly related to ourselves, each individual will possess immortal powers, and will be prepared while on earth, for the joys of eternal redemption, or for sufferings without end or mitigation, it is impossible, that any person of piety or reflection should deny, that he stands in the most interesting relation to posterity; nor can such an one forbear to inquire, whether his descendants shall be the patrons of piety and Christian morals, or diffuse around them the poison of infidelity, and profligate habits.

To the Christian, who indulges these reflections, and feels that solicitude which they are calculated to excite, no passage, perhaps, in the whole inspired volume, can be more grateful, than that, which has been read from the evangelical prophet:—As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My spirit that is upon thee, and my words, which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart from thy mouth, nor from the mouth of thy seed, nor from the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever.

The blessings, comprehended in the promise, are means of instruction, together with the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit: My Spirit, that is upon thee, and my words shall not depart out of thy mouth, &c. It seems, therefore, promised to the professing people of God, that the essential truths of religion shall be preserved among their children and remote descendants; that public preaching shall be enjoyed; and the ordinances of Christianity retained. In addition to this, there shall be, from time to time, such communications of divine influence, as shall ensure effect to evangelical doctrines: God's word shall not return unto him void; but shall accomplish that, which he shall please, and prosper in the thing whereto it is sent. Parents

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shall have the joy of seeing their children walk in the truth. The piety of one generation shall descend to another; so that there shall at no time be occasion for inquiring, "why the former days were better than these."

Against that explanation of the text, which has now been given, it may perhaps be objected, that it receives no support from acknowledged facts. We do not perceive in the church of God, that pious succession, which, agreeably to this explanation, the immutable God has pledged himself to provide.

To this I reply, that many promises in Scripture are conditional, even where no conditions are expressed. From many proofs of this, we select the following; I mean the rejection of the house of Eli from sacerdotal honors, on account of the profligacy prevailing in his family; which profligacy he had not used sufficient efforts to suppress: Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me forever. But now the Lord saith, be it far from me; for them that honor me, I will honor; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.

In like manner, when God promises to his professing people, whether collectively or individually, that their successors, or descendants, shall receive the blessings of his word and spirit, it seems to be with the understanding, that certain things, on their part, are to be performed; that each rising generation in the series shall receive such Christian attention and instruction from parents, guardians, or the church, as the interesting relation which the latter sustain to the former, requires them to impart. When the want of this is flagrant, or habitual, neither parents, nor churches, can, with any propriety, appropriate the promise contained in the text. In places, in churches, and families, where the light of Christianity once shone with all its clearness, and where the spirit of piety *was* exhibited in its native excellence, there is *now* gross error, palpable darkness, or unblushing impiety. To say nothing of the seven churches of Asia, those golden candlesticks, in the midst of which was seen walking, one like the Son of man, what are the present effects of all that flood

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of light, which was once poured on the city of Jerusalem and the land of Palestine? "The pure gospel of Christ," says a recent traveller, "every where the herald of civilization and science, is almost as little known in the Holy Land, as in California, or New Holland. A series of legendary traditions, mingled with remains of Judaism, and the wretched phantasies of illiterate ascetics, may now and then exhibit a glimmering of heavenly light. But, if we seek the blessed effects of Christianity in the land of Canaan, we must look for that period, when 'the desert shall blossom as the rose, and the wilderness become a fruitful field.'".

It may now, I think, be fairly inferred, that something is to be done by Christian parents, by churches, by the Christian community, that the blessings, mentioned in the text, may be conferred on the rising generation and their posterity. We are bound to consecrate our influence to the cause of God; i. e. to the interests of truth, happiness, and virtue. But the influence of every man extends somewhat beyond the limits of mortal existence. The civil, literary, moral, and religious character of future generations, will be materially affected by the piety or impiety, the wisdom or folly, the activity or sloth, of those who are, at present, in active life.

I now proceed, very briefly, to specify some of those things, which are necessary on our part, that the blessings, promised in the text, may be conferred on our descendants: that God may prevent his Spirit and his words from departing from the mouth of our seed, or of our seed's seed.

1. It is necessary that we ourselves should have, not only a uniform, deep-rooted conviction of the truth of Christianity, but a sensible apprehension of its promises, threatenings, and requisitions. Our religion will doubtless make no very deep impression on the minds of others, while its influence on our own appears to be inconstant and superficial. Besides, if such be the state or cast of our religion, it will want that hardiness and energy, without which enlarged purposes of benevolence, and piety, will neither be formed nor carried into effect. Had Abraham

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been a believer, of doubtful or wavering character, God would not have given such honorable assurance, as to the effects which his religion should have on his descendants: I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.

2. That the Spirit of God and his words may not depart from our posterity, it is obviously requisite, that knowledge of the Holy Scriptures should be early and sedulously communicated. Here is the safe repository of our religion; the source and guardian of the Christian faith. Every true church, every Christian on earth, has imbibed the waters of life from this fountain. The knowledge of sacred Scripture, when once obtained, is, to a certain degree, wrought into the character; by which I mean, that it imposes the most salutary restraints, by producing a sense of responsibility—exhibits a perfect code of moral precepts—and represents religion as something solemn, magnificent, vast, and immutable. Attention to these writings, is to be perpetually urged upon the young. All opportunities are to be improved for fixing their minds on that system of faith and morals, which the Scriptures inculcate. This method must be pursued with unyielding perseverance. It is a divine ordinance—a mode of education, instituted by the Author of revealed religion: These words, which I command thee this day, said God to Israel, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. By such means was a theoretical and practical knowledge of God, to be preserved and cherished in the church of Israel, and the land of promise. Domestic education was part of that system, by which Jehovah designed to secure to himself a chosen people. In the words, quoted from Deuteronomy, there is one sentiment peculiarly to be noticed; especially, as it corroborates the remarks which were made under the preceding article: The words that I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart. This is men-

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tioned as a pre-requisite, to a persevering and successful communication of them to others. The principles of revelation are to be so incorporated into the character, as to exhibit themselves in habits, actions, and conversation—they are to produce a facility and readiness in the communication of inspired doctrine: They are to cause our doctrine to drop as the rain, our speech to distil as the dew; as the small rain on the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass.

In regard to domestic education, there is perfect agreement between the religion of Moses, and that of Christ. By the latter, as well as the former, parents are required to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The rising generation may doubtless be taught from other books besides the Scriptures. If oral instruction may be conveyed in words, different from those of inspiration, so doubtless may written instruction. It is on this ground, that religious dissertations and discourses have been made public, in every age. Summaries of the Christian faith, seem likewise to have been used in all periods of the church. It cannot be easily conceived, either that a Christian parent should suffer his children to remain ignorant of Christianity, until, by reading, he shall be enabled to instruct himself; or, that he should, in conveying instruction, as to the plainest doctrines of the Bible, fear to vary in any measure, from the language in which they are expressed. Still a broad and distinct line should be cautiously drawn between the oracles of God, and any symbol or abstract of Christian doctrine, formed by men uninspired, and therefore liable to err in judgment. If we desire, that God's words, and his Spirit should not depart from our posterity and successors, they should be assiduously taught to make this distinction. It was not more advantageous to Timothy, than honorable to her who had superintended his youth, "that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures." By means of such education he was, by grace, enabled to possess and cultivate the same faith, which first dwelt in his pious progenitors.

3. That the words and Spirit of God may not depart out of the mouth of our seed, or of our seed's seed, it is emphatically

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necessary, that family prayer be maintained; and that it often have reference distinctly to them. To enumerate that variety of ways, in which the prayers and intercessions of parents may be advantageous to their children, would itself require more time, than can be allowed to this whole discourse.

Prayer is practical piety. You teach your family the being, perfections, and government of God. They see that you acknowledge his existence, adore his perfections, and implore his superintending care. You teach them that all have sinned; and you confess before God your own demerit. You instruct them concerning the offices of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. They hear you offer prayers, in which these offices are recognized, and corresponding petitions are made. You teach them that devout dispositions, and holy desires,—that ability to make an acceptable offering, is, with humble gratitude, to be ascribed to a divine influence, which "helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession." They occasionally observe in you, that enlargement, feeling, and copiousness in prayer,—that lively sense of things invisible,—that consciousness of obligation, and those affecting views of redeeming mercy, which your religious belief ought to inspire, but in the actual existence of which, they perceive evidence of the presence and agency of God. Scarce any thing tends more directly to impart just ideas, both as to the theory and power of religion, than the prayers of consistent, judicious, enlightened Christians. No instruction, it is believed, which can be imparted to the minds of our children, has greater effect in forming their religious character, than that, which they derive from family worship.

But prayer is to be considered, not merely, or chiefly, as a means of instruction, but as application to a God, infinitely wise and all-sufficient. Parental intercession for children is made, either when the latter are present, or when they are not. In the former case, that mixture of devotion to God with affectionate concern for their welfare, which is likely to be exhibited in these intercessions, is peculiarly adapted to arrest the attention, to excite inquiry, and to produce religious anxiety. Why should

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the parent be solicitous for the child, if the child has no reason to be concerned for himself? Besides, to whom should application be made, that the words and Spirit of God may never be withdrawn from our seed, but to God himself, the source of light and divine influence? God requires prayer, as a part of worship, and allows his servants to hope for a gracious answer, to such prayers as are offered with faith and submission. As God has appointed parents to be the guardians and instructors of their children, he requires them to perform the duties of such a relation, relying on his strength, and expecting from him a joyful issue. It is not the habit of God to require his people to pray, and then to disregard their prayers.

When Christian parents, having peculiarly strong desires that their children may experience a moral renovation, supplicate the grace of God, with corresponding importunity and perseverance, they can read with peculiar pleasure and animated hope, such promises as are contained in the following language: I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessings on thine offspring; and they shall spring up, as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

But children should find instructors and guardians, not in their parents only, but likewise in the church of Christ. That those who have received the ordinance of baptism, sustain to the church a relation different from that of other children, will not be denied by any who believe that the ordinance is to be administered to infants. The treatment which they receive from the church, should doubtless correspond with their relation to it. If the one is peculiar, so likewise should be the other. Such, it appears, was the prevalent opinion among the fathers of New-England. "The General Court of Massachusetts in the year 1677, considered the neglect of care over the children of church members, as among the causes which brought down the judgments of God on the land; and recommended a re-

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formation to the elders and brethren." The opinion of such a body clearly shows what had once been, not only the common sentiments on this subject, but the customary practice. The judgments of God, under which the province was then laboring, would not have been attributed to the negligence of churches, unless such negligence, either in whole or in part, had been peculiar to the age, then present, unless it had been a departure from the practice of better times. In what manner the offspring of the church are to be distinguished, and in what way it is most expedient, that the duties which we owe them should be performed, it becomes not me to determine. Perhaps I may be allowed to inquire, whether a general agreement among churches, to assemble at stated periods, such children as pertain to them respectively, for the purpose of instruction, admonition, and prayer, would be either impracticable, or without use. Can churches very confidently hope, that the word and Spirit of God will not depart from their seed forever, if no special efforts are made to teach them these words—if no seasons are devoted to prayer for the effusions of divine grace?

4. If Christians of the present generation, are desirous that religion should flourish among their descendants, they must now make it apparent, both by word and deed, that they themselves hold it in high estimation. By which I mean, that they must not only speak of religion, as that in which they feel a lively interest, but must be constant in their use of its means and ordinances, and be ready to make pecuniary sacrifices for its support. If permanent establishments are now made for the advancement of religion, they will be our witnesses in years to come; they will indicate to posterity our views of religion, and augment their ability to maintain it.

It is a fundamental maxim in Christianity, that no man liveth to himself. Our care, next to that which has for its object our own salvation, is naturally directed to our families, and to those parts of the Christian church, with which we are respectively united. But here must not be the limits by which, either our attention, or beneficence is to be circumscribed. The waste

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places of Zion are to be sought out, visited, and, if possible, repaired. The whole of religion is, by our Saviour, comprehended in love to God, and our neighbor. This elevated principle will not suffer us to be indifferent, either to the divine honor, or to human salvation. Many places there are, in our country, in which, either through inability, or indisposition, the Christian religion is not preached—its ordinances are not enjoyed. The Sabbath may be distinguished from other portions of the week, by indolence, apathy, or dissipation, but not by public worship, or private devotion. Domestic religion does not usually long survive the stated worship of the sanctuary. The Scriptures will not long be read with interest in the family, when they have ceased to be explained in public assemblies. All, indeed, which constitutes the difference between a Christian, and pagan community, will gradually disappear. As Christianity retires, men lose sight of immortality, and a retribution; restraints are removed from human passions; present advantage or gratification, is contemplated as the only good; the character of man is exchanged for that of an animal, soon to perish; and all practical morality is comprehended in this sentence: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. It is no ordinary or light guilt, which is contracted by Christians, when, without an effort to prevent it, they suffer desolations like these, to occur within the sphere of their influence. If the apostles had good reasons for attempting to convert pagans to Christianity, we, so far as the prevention of it lies within our power, can never be justified in suffering Christianity to be exchanged for paganism. The opinion, that the obligations of a Christian, as to supporting the institutions of religion, are all circumscribed within the limits of a single parish, though it seems long to have been acquiesced in, can be reconciled, neither with the dictates of reason, nor the commands of Scripture. Christianity is a boon, originally bestowed on men without their seeking. But they who do not desire the gospel, you say, do not deserve it. But, neither did the Jews deserve it, to whom it was first proclaimed; nor the Gentiles, to whom the apostle was nevertheless commanded to

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preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The object of the apostles was to create a desire for religious instruction, and to excite love to the Redeemer, where neither had been previously felt. But, in many places, it is well known, the institutions of religion are already appreciated in some good proportion to their real value, where there is, undeniably, inability adequately to remunerate an established teacher. The claims, which are made by individuals and families, thus unhappily situated, on the charitable attention of Christians, more highly favored, have the support of reason, humanity and Scripture. When St. Paul was planting churches in the different parts of Greece, he made known to his converts, though but recently imbued with the Christian doctrine, the temporal wants of their far distant brethren, the poor saints at Jerusalem. While soliciting their benevolence for this object, he proceeds on this ground, that there should be sympathy through all parts of the Christian church, and that the wants of particular sections of the church should be relieved by those on whom the bounties of Providence had been more liberally bestowed: I mean not, saith he, that others should be eased, and you burdened; but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance may be a supply for your want; that there may be equality. As it is written, He that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack. Now the argument is evidently more powerful, in reference to the spiritual wants of our destitute brethren, than it was in its original application.

The bearing which these reflections have on the main subject of this discourse, is not less real or important, than their reference to the interests of our Missionary Society. Exertions for the establishment of Zion, or for the rebuilding of her waste places, are calculated to make, at present, salutary impressions on the rising generation. Reverence for religion in their minds, is thus, insensibly, but effectually increased. Their own mental habits are gradually accommodated to the measures and efforts, requisite to perpetuate, enlarge, and improve those purposes of

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Christian benevolence, which are now formed. These institutions, which are established and maintained with some expense and labor, will, as already observed, be a standing admonition and witness against them, should they apostatize from the faith of Christ. Besides, by being the means of increasing religion in some places, and of preventing its decline in others, we shall, if God bestow his grace, purify the atmosphere for our own descendants, and render it more conducive to moral soundness, and spiritual life.

In addition to these considerations, it should be observed, that, in the revolution of years, the state of churches, now flourishing, may be so greatly changed, as to render the aid of other churches indispensable to the support of Christian institutions. Our successors, both in the church and family, may receive assistance and encouragement from the posterity of those, to whom we are instrumental of communicating the means and blessings of religion. No one accustomed to notice the mutability of human affairs, will assert, that the facts here supposed, are very unlikely to occur. The argument, therefore, which the apostle used with the Corinthians may, with pertinency and justice, be applied to ourselves: Now, at this time your abundance may be a supply to their wants, that their abundance may be a supply to your wants.

5. Solomon has taught us that "it is not good for the soul to be without knowledge." There is, indeed, no necessary or invariable connexion between intellectual, and moral improvement. The mental powers may be highly cultivated, while the heart and character are deeply debased. Or real virtue, and that in a high degree, may exist, where intellectual improvement is exceedingly limited. It is, however, a truth generally known, that knowledge is more favorable than ignorance, to piety and moral character. The religion of Christ was introduced by its divine Author, during an age of literature and refinement. This religion has never shunned, but always challenged investigation. This matter seems to be well understood both by its friends and its enemies. The emperor Julian, it has been often re-

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marked, to exterminate Christianity, attempted the suppression of literature among Christians. Luther and his illustrious coadjutors, in order that long established error might yield to sound doctrine, awakened the powers of latent intellect, by infusing light into the public mind. Agreeably to this, the Huguenot, i. e. protestant churches, which, for many years after the reformation, existed and flourished in France, consecrated a portion of their annual income to the object of publicly educating youth for the ministry. It is impossible that knowledge, whether found in the teachers of religion, or diffused through the mass of the community, should be otherwise than favorable to the progress of truth, or that truth should be otherwise than favorable to piety. If, therefore, we desire that the words of God, and his Spirit should remain with our descendants and successors, provision should be made for the present and future prevalence of good learning. The influence of common schools, when judiciously superintended, and committed to the care of such as have competency of knowledge, and a pure, moral character, especially, if to these, piety be added, is of incalculable value, not only to the civil State, but to the church of Christ. The fuel, which feeds fanaticism and disorder, is hereby diminished, and in some instances, entirely removed.

This system of common education, so well meriting to be assiduously cherished, does by no means supersede institutions of a different kind, and such as shall aim at higher objects. The existence of public seminaries has an intimate connexion with the honor of religion, and the welfare of the church. Every good man is, therefore, bound to favor the cause of literature and science: That wisdom and knowledge may be the stability of our times, and the fear of the Lord our treasure.

We might, indeed, proceed much further in mentioning particulars, connected with the moral character of posterity.—Enough has been said, it is believed, to show that our relation to them is attended with duties of no light obligation, or trifling moment. To discharge these duties with constancy and active zeal, we have, at present, many encouragements; we are co-

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operating with thousands; we have the countenance of almost the whole Christian world. To form and execute designs of Christian benevolence is the distinguishing habit of our times. To the astonishment of every mind, inured either to piety or contemplation, God has, within a few years, renewed the face of the Christian world. We are justified in cherishing animating hopes as to the condition of posterity. When we shall have fallen asleep, not being permitted to continue by reason of death, our children will not be left to pass their trial in a nation of infidels. They will not, we confidently hope, be taught that death is an everlasting sleep, or to deny that God, "who, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the fathers of the Jewish nation by the prophets, hath in these last ages, spoken to the world by Jesus Christ." They will find objects and institutions at once indicating, and promoting, reverence for God and revealed religion.

Such is the present prospect. But, whether this prospect shall brighten or be obscured, will depend on the continuance of that general system of active beneficence, which has been so extensively and successfully adopted; and on the adoption, it is humbly conceived, of particular means, of which some have been enumerated in this discourse. Our ancestors did much for us. In numerous respects, we now enjoy the result of their piety and foresight. It remains to be seen, whether we are willing to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to God and them, by similar attention to our successors. Let us not be wanting to our offspring, and their descendants; but animated by that precious promise contained in the text, relative to the seed of God's professing people, let us transmit to others, what our ancestors conveyed to us: He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers; that they should make them known to their children; that the generations to come may know them, even the children which shall be born, who shall arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget his works, but keep his commandments.

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SERMON XV.

ON CONSCIENCE.

Romans 2: 15.— Their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, accusing, or else excusing, one another.

These words are part of a sentence, in which St. Paul describes the character and condition of pagans. He shows, that though destitute of supernatural revelation, they have, in common with all men, certain degrees of light communicated to them, relating to God and moral obligation: The invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things, that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.—Again: When the Gentiles, who have not the law, do, by nature, the things, contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which show the works of the law written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while, accusing or else excusing one another. By the light, communicated to the Gentiles, are meant their rational powers, taken in connexion with all those objects of nature, in contemplating which these powers may be employed.

The apostle may, therefore, be considered as affirming, that Gentiles, to whom no special revelation has been made, are yet furnished with a power of moral discernment;—a rule, which is actually applied in a greater or less degree, both to their own behavior, and to that of others. That it was applied to their own actions, appears from these words, "Their consciences also bearing them witness;" and that it was applied to the actions of others, is shown in what immediately follows, "Their thoughts, the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another." By

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praising some actions as virtuous, and condemning others as vicious, they implicitly acknowledge a difference between virtue and vice,—and that the one was of good, and the other of ill desert.

My present object is to consider the nature and power of that principle in man, which is usually denominated conscience or the moral sense.

First, we shall inquire into the nature of this principle. That we may do this the more successfully, let me request you to direct your attention, for a few moments, to that difference, which is acknowledged to exist in human actions.

Some actions, you well know, are thought worthy of approbation; and others, of blame. This difference does not depend on the casual result of such actions; but on the intention with which they are supposed to be performed. Were a person to exert himself for a long time, and with much industry, to advance the interest of his neighbors, or that of the public, and should be frustrated in his designs, by some casualty, which no sagacity could foresee, he could never blame himself for the event, nor reflect on his intentions and efforts with other feelings than those of approbation; in both which respects, the feelings and judgment of all persons of sober reflection would correspond with his own. They could not but feel, that his endeavors had been such as to entitle him to esteem. And, as for the unforeseen issue, they could no more contemplate that with censure, than he could with remorse. On the other hand, should a man form purposes, either of treachery, or treason, and, by a seasonable discovery, or some unexpected occurrence, real good should result to those who were to have been the victims of his crime, his own character, both to himself and others, must appear precisely the same, as if his purposes had been executed. The emotions with which the mind contemplates virtue or vice, are entirely different from those, with which it contemplates advantage or disadvantage, pleasure or pain. Men never feel remorse for misfortunes, as such, or for things which are unavoidable. But, consequent on the perpetration of a crime, there is remorse, shame, self-reproach, a sense of unworthiness. No man is afraid

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to meet himself, because he has been unfortunate; but thousands have dreaded solitude, after the performance of an impious, dishonest, cruel, or malignant action. Misfortunes may produce grief; but nothing but the consciousness of crime is followed by remorse.

The existence of these facts, as they fall within the observation of all men, will hardly be denied. From the rational nature which God has given us, we perceive a difference between virtue and vice, as readily and as unavoidably, as between a mountain and a valley, between a crooked line and a straight one, between the light of day and the darkness of midnight. You never can bring the mind to judge of falsehood, injustice, ingratitude, and selfishness in general, as right, and worthy of praise; nor of kindness, benevolence, and honesty, as wrong. This moral discernment of a difference in human actions; this judgment which we form of human conduct, whether our own or that of others, requires neither long deliberation, extraordinary intellectual powers, nor a high degree of mental refinement. That ingratitude towards benefactors, and a cold indifference to the wants and sufferings of others, are qualities of ill desert and character, is as clearly apparent to the mind of a cottager, as to the apprehension of a statesman or prince.

Though the general distinction between virtue and vice may be considered as intuitively apparent, and universally acknowledged, there may, doubtless, be an individual action, whose circumstances and relations are such as to render questionable its moral denomination. Such in the apostolic age, was the eating of meats, which had been offered to idols; and the observance of particular days. So likewise may passion, or self-interest, prevent men from judging rightly of their own deportment, on particular occasions, when the case itself involves no real difficulty.

That king David's moral discernment, as it respected human actions in general, was not impaired during the time of his apostasy and impenitence, appears by the prompt decision, which he made in reference to the unfeeling oppressor, whose cruelty

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was portrayed in Nathan's parable. His own more aggravated offence was viewed at the same time, without uneasiness or self-reproach. As self-interest may blind a judge, who, in ordinary cases, discerns with accuracy, and forms righteous decisions; so may conscience be seduced to remain silent, or yield her assent to the claims of passion: If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. Paul, before his conversion, verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of the Lord Jesus. The time has been, when other persecutors of truth have thought that they were doing God service. But in none of these cases, can we suppose that there was any physical inability to discern the will of God, and the consequent path of duty. No man sins through unavoidable ignorance. It may, perhaps, be considered as universally true, that moral discernment never fails, but in consequence of a disordered heart.

This power of moral discernment, of which we are speaking, is attended with present consequences of great moment, and has the most interesting relation to the retributions of another life. No sooner do we discern a right and wrong in human actions, than the one is approved, and the other condemned. The actions of others may be condemned without pain to ourselves, but when this moral discernment is applied to our own actions, feeling, and character, the effects are sensibly felt. We are so constituted, that we cannot, without uneasiness, see the right and follow the wrong. When reason and character are at variance—when acknowledged propriety and duty are on one side, and inclination and actions are on the other, a man finds himself unhappy, just in proportion as this disagreement is discerned and regarded. This dissatisfaction and self-reproach is a punishment immediately consequent on his violating the law in the mind;—a punishment which is increased, whether he contemplates God, who is the author of this law, or his fellow men, who, he knows have the same law, and cannot but condemn every quality or action, by which it is violated. Hence we see, with what propriety this law in the mind has been said

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to be of such an extraordinary nature, as to execute itself. The sinner not only perceives that there is a law, but he feels the effects of it. He is not only condemned, but punished by a tribunal established in his own breast.

Besides, if we perceive a difference between right and wrong, it is certain, not only that God must see the same difference, but that it is He who enables us to perceive it. It may be considered, therefore, as a law, which has a divine author, and by which we are required to govern ourselves. The sinner, therefore, not only condemns himself, but is conscious of being under the condemnation of God; who sees far more distinctly than he can, the beauty and worth of virtue, and the deformity and turpitude of vice. Consequently, in addition to his self-reproach, he has well-grounded apprehensions of danger, "a fearful looking for of judgment," at a tribunal, whose decisions will not only confirm those of his own mind, but be followed by consequences of more dreadful import.

Perhaps conscience has been rightly defined, as "nothing more than our own opinion, or judgment, of the moral rectitude, or pravity of our own actions." Whether it is reason, or a distinct principle of our nature, which leads us to form this judgment, is not material. Certain it is, that something within us does sit in judgment on ourselves; and that the decision, which this something inclines us to make is, generally speaking, though not invariably, a right decision. Hence it is common to make appeals to the conscience, the reason, the judgment, even of vicious men; in whom it is believed that the moral sense, though in some measure benumbed, or perverted, is not extinct.

We now proceed to notice some instances in which the power of conscience has been displayed. When Adam, first after his defection, heard the voice of God, he concealed "himself among the trees of the garden." He was reproached, not only by the expostulation of his Maker, but by his own mind. He knew that the displeasure of God was just, and that therefore, no adequate, no reasonable defence could be made. Pharaoh, on several occasions, felt remorse, when reflecting on his per-

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fidious impiety: The Lord is righteous, said he, but I and my people are wicked. Saul, during all the latter part of his life, was rendered an object of compassion by the habitual checks and forebodings of conscience. He knew, and sometimes acknowledged, that his rival was divinely designated to fill the throne of Israel. Yet his malignant passions impelled him to persecute this rival with unremitting industry. Ahab had sent into all lands to apprehend the prophet Elijah, under pretence, that the latter had brought the judgments of God on the nation. At their first interview, the king accosts the prophet thus: Art thou he that troubleth Israel? To which the prophet boldly replies: I am not he that troubleth Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord. The prophet was now in the king's power. Why then was he not punished, as had been intended! Evidently for this reason, Ahab was not less condemned by his own mind, than he was by the prophet's reply. He was, in truth, more afraid of the prophet, than the prophet was of him.

When Judas had betrayed Christ, and had received the stipulated recompense, the terrors of his own conscience arrayed themselves against him. The language of the evangelist is: He saw that he was condemned. The sentence was immediately followed by punishment; I mean by remorse, so intolerable that the unhappy sinner could no longer endure it. By violent means he disengages himself from a burdensome life, to ascertain whether any future pains can be greater than the anguish of mind, by which he is now tormented.

In ages, and places, less remote, the power of conscience has been displayed in a similar manner. Sometimes self-reproaches are loudly uttered. Instances are not wanting of persons, who, having by flagitious means acquired, and for many years enjoyed, wealth and influence, have been rebuked by their consciences so suddenly and efficaciously, that they not only disclosed crimes of which they had never been suspected, but implored the merited punishment. Others, in a state of mind, more dangerous and desperate, have imitated the perfidious dis-

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ciple, and procured death by their own hands, that they might at once know the worst of their destiny.

There are other effects of self-condemnation, less powerful, indeed, but more common. To the view of every person, two rival interests are displayed. Reason, religion, and a well directed conscience are on one side; and they always speak the same language. On the other, are indolence and all those evil passions, which are seated in the human breast. If the three powerful monitors, first mentioned, could be effectually silenced; could reason, conscience, and religion be induced forever to withdraw their claims, men might, by obeying no law, but that of appetite, be as happy in brutal pleasure, as the very brutes themselves. But before these monitors can be silenced, much time and effort must be employed; much conflict must be maintained, and many wounds received. It was long since asserted, the "way of transgressors is hard." The truth of this has been severely felt by many, while forming an attachment to particular vices. Persons of dissipated and prodigal habits, have many hours, when reflection is painful, and even existence is irksome. It is not easy for a man to bring himself to abandon all claims to a rational and moral nature. Even pride will remonstrate against so base a relinquishment. A man cannot easily be induced deliberately to say, "As for the dictates of reason and the obligations of morality; all that is sublime in the one, or beautiful in the other, I renounce forever. Ye rational beings, whether angels or men, with you I will no longer lay claim to alliance. Whatever pleasures you have, either in possession or prospect, they shall be exclusively your own. From this moment I cease to be a competitor." But so long as reason is not renounced, it will support the claims, both of Christian morals and Christian piety. He that wastes his time, follows his passions, or neglects his soul, acts as certainly against his own judgment,—his own conviction of right and wrong, as against the commands and principles of divine revelation. Infinite responsibility is attached to the possession of intellectual and moral powers. Whether time or eternity is regarded, reason demands

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a life of sobriety, caution, and self denial. Now, is it possible, that a man should be otherwise, than miserable, who is forever at warfare with himself; who pursues habitually the very course, which he condemns? In the full enjoyment of youth and of health unimpaired, in the midst of gay, splendid and fashionable vices, many persons,—even those, who have been thought as happy as vice could make them, have even wished to exchange their species;—have wished to be divested of their rational nature, that they might be no longer tormented with the anticipation of a judgment to come! Individuals, who have rendered themselves conspicuous by ridiculing serious religion, calling its sorrows moroseness, and its joys enthusiasm, have been alarmed even by the sound of a shaken leaf, and have fled to scenes of dissipation, as their only retreat from terror.

We shall now make several reflections by way of improvement.

I. If there are such qualities, as virtue and vice, it is infinitely important, that the distinction between them should be perceived. This power of discerning the line which separates them, is, therefore, a most important part of our moral constitution. But the natural tendency of a thoughtless sinful life, is to enfeeble this power, to prevent it from forming right decisions, and to render the heart insensible to its dictates. If the moral sense, that guide, which God has graciously appointed to direct human feelings and conduct, is either destroyed, or blinded, or corrupted, the whole life will be marked with doubts, confusion and guilt. To this our Saviour seems to have had reference in the following words: If the light, which is in you, be darkness, how great is that darkness.

II. As the moral sense is impaired by habitual vice,—as men accustom themselves to act, without regard to reason or the divine law, moral distinctions are forgotten, and a general apathy prevails on religious subjects. To remove this apathy by fixing the mind on these subjects, by causing it clearly to perceive moral distinctions, and the eternal obligations of virtue and holiness, is the first effect produced by divine influence in regeneration. The sinner is led to apply to his own heart and actions, that

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immutable law, which is binding on every intelligent being. His surprise, anxiety, and terror, result from contemplating his character, his obligations, and his danger. He perceives what is right, and is conscious, at the same time, of possessing a strong inclination to that which is wrong. "I was alive without the law once," saith the apostle; "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." No person, in a similar state of mind, can doubt, that there is a perfect agreement between reason and the divine law, or deny, that the latter is holy, just and good; but he "sees another law in his members, warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin and death." The anxiety, felt by persons in these circumstances, naturally results, perhaps, from their perception of danger.

III. It has been asserted, in this discourse, that reason and religion are always found on the same side, and speak the same language. For the truth of this I make a deliberate and solemn appeal to all present. In religion, what is implied? It is implied, that our present characters should be formed on the principle of the soul's immortality;—that we labor chiefly for that "meat, which endureth to everlasting life." I ask whether it is, or is not, the dictate of reason, that our estimate of objects, and attention to them, should be apportioned to their value?—and whether our present precarious, fragile existence should engross our thoughts, or be regarded only in subordination to that eternity, which is to come? Is there a person present, that will say, the greater is to be sacrificed to the less; that a thousand years should be preferred to a million, and that the short space of human life should be preferred to both?—It is implied in religion, that we love God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart." If this demand appears extravagant, or absurd, permit me to ask, whether it is rational to love virtue and virtuous men?—Whether it is rational to love those most, who have most virtue? If so, whether we may not be required to love supremely Him, whose moral attributes are without limits, or imperfection?—It is implied in religion, that

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our hearts should be rendered penitent and contrite, in view of sin: Thus saith the High and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity. To this man will I look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. When one friend is perfidious to another, when a parent has been abused by his children, when a man has insulted or oppressed his neighbor, what is always demanded of the injurious party? Acknowledgements, expressing sincere and ingenuous regret. Is it as great a crime to offend God as man? Why then do you object to the gospel, that it calls sinners to repentance? It is implied in religion, that the sinner not only repent, but be converted; i. e. that he should have, not merely some temporary regret and pious relentings, but that such feelings should become habitual and permanent;—that an alteration of character should be effected comprehending a change in his pursuits, in the objects of his love and aversion.—It is, lastly, implied in religion, that the sinner should immediately "break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning to the Lord." For how long a time should we think it reasonable to allow a state criminal to retain the disposition, which led him secretly to plot, or openly to attempt the subjugation of his country? For how long a time should any rational being have license to remain hostile to virtue, and to the best interests of the universe? If one week, why not a month; if one month, why not a year; if one year, why not forever? Religion, let it be observed, recognises nothing, as conversion, which is not followed by a virtuous life. But how it is possible, that a dishonest man should too suddenly become honest,—that a profligate man should too suddenly become sober and temperate,—and that any sinner should too suddenly become an upright servant of God; is more, far more, than reason will enable us to perceive. The fact is, that religion requires of man no dispositions, or moral qualities, but such as unbiassed reason condemns him for not possessing.

There are also other occasions, on which the difference between virtue and vice, between piety and irreligion, is very apparent. Christian virtue will endure examination. He, whose

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life evinces such virtue, is nothing disconcerted at being scrutinized by the irreligious. If he is asked why he has respect to all God's commandments; Why he loves the Saviour; Why he subdues his own passions; and labors, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of faith; he may be surprised at the question, but can never want a reply: Jacob shall not now be ashamed; neither shall his face wax pale. He treads firmly, and finds, that there is no trembling in the ground beneath his feet.—Whereas, the sinner hates nothing so much, as rational examination. He feels himself to be vulnerable at every point. Whenever you make an appeal to his reason, he is perturbated. Knowing, that reason is against him, he dreads her reproachful glare, and angry frown.

In connexion with this I make one further remark. You well know, that, in view of death, sinners often lament their want of religion. Sometimes their anxiety rises to desperation, and cannot be witnessed by others without the most painful emotion. Now, let me ask, did you ever know a Christian lamenting, on his dying bed, that he was a Christian?—lamenting, that he had made a humble, unreserved surrender of himself to the will and service of his Creator? Among the millions, that have died in Christian countries, point me to a single one, who in death, retracted his Christian faith; who regretted, that he had chosen God for his portion, and Christ for his Saviour, and desired recovery, only that he might testify before the world his repentance for the virtue and piety of his past life.—No, the very mention,—the recollection of that covenant, which has been established between God and himself, serves to brighten his countenance, and to soften those shades of death, which hang upon his visage.

IV. From that view, which has been taken of the subject, we perceive, that, without religion, it were better to be any thing, than a rational being. Your reason and conscience, let me remind you, will survive the most durable objects of the material universe. Like these, they will not wax old, nor be impaired by time; nay, the revolutions of eternity will but add

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to their activity and comprehension. There will be a clearness of perception hitherto unknown. Your relation to God, the nature of human obligation, and the difference between virtue and vice, will be subjects neither of investigation nor cavil. Reason unbiassed will, in every period of duration, and in all parts of the universe, boldly condemn vice, and declare itself on the side of virtue. The friends of holiness will then experience that peace and overflowing joy, which arise from an intimate and near view of its obligation and good desert, and of the unchangeable approbation of its Author. The conflict, on the other side, which is now maintained in sinners, between reason and inclination, between the conscience and the heart, will then become intolerable, when reason shall have acquired immortal strength, and vice unchangeable dominion. Our Saviour, in describing future punishment, is pleased to speak of "chains and darkness,—a burning lake,—a place prepared for the devil and his angels." How far this language is literal, I pretend not to say. But, we may well conceive, that the suffering of reprobates will be sufficiently great, to justify this language, even if the body should have no share in the pain. Remorse of conscience, we have been reminded, in this discourse, has in the present life, driven persons to desperation. It is impossible to tell how far this remorse may be increased after death, when the organs of moral vision shall become more powerful and discriminating. A consciousness of unworthiness, of turpitude, of folly, and irretrievable loss, will accompany the sinner, in whatever part of the universe,—in whatever part of eternity he may exist. Even if he could escape the eyes of God, there is another immortal enemy, whose upbraidings he cannot escape; I mean his own reason and conscience; I mean himself. Fly where he will, his reason goes with him; and its reproaches will always be felt with undiminished sensibility.

Lastly. We cease to be surprised at the great effort, which the gay and thoughtless often make to keep up their spirits;—in their own language, to expel the glooms,— to banish sorrow. These glooms and this sorrow are very likely to be the result of

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solitary and calm reflection. On such occasions, reason begins to speak, and her voice becomes distinct and audible. The sinner is alarmed; he dreads this assiduous monitor: I hate him, said Ahab; for he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. Scenes and employments must be devised, in which the passions will be interested, and reflection silenced. But this tumultuous state of the feelings cannot be always preserved,—nature herself will not endure it. Nay, reflection may obtrude itself, in the midst of splendid and loud festivity. In the midst of mirth the heart is sorrowful: and the end of that mirth is heaviness. Who could have been less exposed to care and anxious thought; who could have been in a better condition to enjoy a night of revelling, undisturbed, then Belshazzar, when he had made a feast to a thousand of his lords, and was drinking wine before the thousand; when he sent for the golden vessels, which had been taken from the house of God, and suffered his lords, his wives, and concubines to drink in them. Yet in that same hour, came forth the fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; the king saw the part of the hand, that wrote. And the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote, one against the other.

But whether conscience can now be silenced or not, the time is coming, when there will be no amusement,—no expedients for effecting this. Its twinges, of which the sinner is so much afraid, are premonitions of something to come. They are the gentlest corrodings of a worm, which never dies; they are scintillations of that fire, which never can be quenched.

My hearers, in order to be secure, we must be Christians;—in order to be rational, we must be pious; peace must be restored between the intellect and the heart. We must cease to be our own enemies; to expose ourselves to our own reproaches: For if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.

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SERMON XVI.

THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY PROVED FROM ITS LEGITIMATE MORAL EFFECTS.

John 9: 30.—The man answered and said, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

Such was the judicious answer of one, who, having been born blind, had from the power of Jesus, recently received the blessing of sight.

Much attention among the people being excited by this miracle of Christ, but two ways of proceeding lay open to his enemies. One was to disprove the fact; the other, to deny the inference which was likely to be drawn from it. With a view to the former, they summoned as witnesses, the parents of him who had received the cure, and severally interrogated them as to the blindness of their son. Vexed and mortified, perceiving that every new inquiry issued in giving, not only additional certainty, but increased conspicuity to the miracle; their next object was to prevent the people from hence forming any conclusion, favorable to our Saviour's claims and character: This man, say they, is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. We know that God spake by Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence he is. Then follows the reasoning of him, for whose benefit the miracle had been wrought: Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

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The force of this reasoning could be resisted by nothing but inveterate prejudice. And such, at present, seems to be the universal concession. No persons, I believe, in our own times, deny the Christian religion, who, at the same time, allow the miracles attributed to its author. It is doubtful in the mind of no one, that, if the miracles were wrought, the religion is true.

My object in this discourse, is not to illustrate the argument contained in the text, but—by a familiar mode of reasoning, to prove the truth of Christianity, from its legitimate moral effects.

Preliminary to this, a few remarks will be made, as to the change which the gospel has effected in religious sentiment, or theory.

Few of my auditors, perhaps, need to be informed concerning the great outlines of pagan mythology. It is not easy, and perhaps not possible to form exaggerated conceptions of the absurdity, grossness, and immoral tendency of heathen sentiments and heathen worship. Thousands of gods demanded homage from men; gods, whose origin, exposures, adventures, sufferings, and escapes—whose forms, in some instances frightful and monstrous—whose passions, usually impetuous and uncontrolled—whose quarrels, displaying all the weakness, misery, and revenge of mortals—whose characters, in almost all instances, hostile to reason and virtue—were transmitted in mythological tales, sung by enraptured poets, or distinctly brought to view in the very act of worship. In devotional services, rendered to such gods, it would be absurd to suppose that pure and spiritual dispositions—feelings of veneration, confidence, and love, would constitute any part. Such feelings, on such an occasion, would have been incongruous in the worshippers, and most severely reproachful to the objects of worship. Such feelings were not required. If the gods were angry, their wrath was to be appeased, not by a moral reformation, an amendment of the heart and character, but by some idle ceremonies, with which character had no connexion—some stagnant water was to be put in motion—some lake was to be drained off—a nail was to be driven into a consecrated temple—or some games or

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ceremonies fallen into disuse, were to be renewed. In perfect consistency with the character attributed to their gods, gross and abominable crimes were not only allowed, but deemed a necessary part of that religion, which the laws had established. When the apostle uses this language: It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret, he alludes to certain practices, which, in the worship of the gods, were sanctioned by public opinion.

Consider now, for a single moment, what religious sentiments were inculcated by the gospel. There is one God, without beginning, dependence, imperfection, or change—possessing unlimited power, unsearchable wisdom, and perfect goodness.—This one living and true God maintains a government, embracing all beings and all events, whether great or small. The law, which he has enacted for his intelligent creation, is the law of virtue. His estimation of men and angels, is exactly proportionate to their observance or neglect of this law. God is a spirit, and they who worship Him, must do it in spirit and in truth. No sacrifices, however costly—no prayers, in whatever words conceived, with whatever looks or gestures accompanied—no punctilious adherence to forms and ceremonies, even though such forms and ceremonies are of divine institution, will meet acceptance, and obtain reward, so long as there is wanting at heart, a sincere, shall I say, an honest regard to the law of God—a principle of piety, which prompts to the performance of all duty. They only, who imbibe and retain this principle, will experience the mercy of God, in that day, when he will judge the world in righteousness. And this mercy is to be exercised through the atonement of him, "who, by one offering, has perfected forever them that are sanctified."

From these general remarks it will be apparent that darkness and light are scarcely more opposite, than that religion which Jesus Christ found, and that which he left, among men. Were there present a single infidel, I would appeal to his reason, and even to his candor, whether the Christian theory of religion is not, beyond comparison and beyond utterance, superior to that

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which the heathen world, whether Greek or Barbarian, had received; and whether any one who preached successfully this religion among the heathen, might not be said to "open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light;" and whether it is credible, that a Jewish mechanic, born in circumstances which precluded intellectual research, should, all at once, have brought to light a system of grace and truth, for which the whole world had been engaged for thousands of years, in painful, but unavailing search.

As there is an important connexion between the intellectual and moral nature of man—as disorderly practice naturally results from false and inconsistent theories, and the perception of a direct path does of itself, imply a strong inducement to pursue it—it was to have been expected, that whenever the pure, intelligible, and consistent doctrines of Christianity should take place of the gross darkness, which had previously covered the earth, a corresponding change would be effected in the state of moral character and moral feeling.

We shall now endeavor to show, that, agreeably to such an expectation, the effect of Christianity has been displayed in changing national customs—in meliorating public morals, and in converting great numbers, in Christian countries, from a life, either of open vice, or religious insensibility.

In proof of our first proposition, but few instances will be cited, from the multitude which might be adduced. In exhibiting these, I shall use the words of a late writer, justly held in high estimation: "Christianity has mitigated the conduct of war, and the treatment of captives. It has softened the administration of despotic, or nominally despotic governments. It has abolished polygamy. It has restrained the licentiousness of divorce. It has put an end to the exposure of children, and immolation of slaves. It has suppressed the combats of gladiators, and the impurities of religious rites. It has greatly meliorated the condition of the laborious part, that is to say, of the mass of every community, by procuring for them a day of weekly rest. In all countries in which it is professed, it has

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produced many establishments for the relief of sickness and poverty; and in some, a regular and general provision by law. It has triumphed over the slavery established in the Roman empire; it is contending, and, I trust, will one day prevail against the worse slavery of the West Indies."—(Paley's Evid. 370.)

The spirit of investigation and commercial enterprise has done much to prevent man from continuing a stranger to his species. Remote seas have been visited, continents have been traversed, and islands have been discovered. Of the many millions of pagans, thus introduced to our knowledge, it would be difficult to find a single tribe or community, among whom the relations and duties of man are either regarded, or understood. If we do not look for morality among the inhabitants of Japan, or China, or Hindoostan, as little was it found among the aborigines of America, or on the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

Now, wherever Christianity is introduced, it is invariably accompanied with a moral reformation, commensurate with the attention it receives, and the degree in which it is suffered to influence the character.

It occurs to your minds, perhaps, that little praise can be bestowed on the morals of many a nation, where Christianity has for a long time been received. This is indeed true; but it militates nothing with the preceding assertion, which is, that "when this religion is introduced into a community or nation, it produces a moral reformation, commensurate with the attention it receives, and to the degree in which it is suffered to influence the character." That Christianity has abrogated many national customs which were hostile to virtue, and introduced others of an opposite tendency, is too obvious to be denied. That it has raised the standard of morality in every nation where its authority has been acknowledged, may be asserted with equal confidence. Of this no man can be doubtful, who contemplates those enormities, which have been already alluded to, as practised among the heathen; which were not only tolerated, but justified by public opinion, and some of them by

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established laws. But Christianity is a religion of choice, and not of compulsion. It is not answerable for those who do not yield to its authority. Its pre-eminence over every other religion is sufficiently shown, if its moral tendency is superior to theirs; and if individuals and nations are distinguished for virtue, in proportion as they are sensible to its motives, and obedient to its precepts. Now, to any person who has read the New Testament, an appeal may be safely made, as to its moral tendency, and as to the dispositions and behavior of any man, or body of men, who should with conscience and good fidelity, adopt its principles as the rule of life.

We next proceed to show, as was intended, that the effect of Christianity has been displayed in converting many among nominal Christians, from a life either of open vice or religious insensibility.

Previous presumption against this will be diminished, or entirely removed by a recurrence to the early history of the church.

Paul has informed us, as to the change, which religion produced in the character of some, who were afterwards members of the Corinthian church. Having enumerated idolaters, effeminate, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners, he subjoins, "and such were some of you; but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

As public morals in a Christian community, are far better than they were before the introduction of Christianity, it is not to be expected, that its visible effect on character should ordinarily be as striking among ourselves, as it was in the instances just cited. Religion imposes restraint in a greater or less degree, on every individual of a Christian nation. It produces the appearance of convalescence, in a thousand instances, where the source of the disease is not removed. It renders the maniac less wild and ferocious, even where the empire of reason is never regained. On the other hand, a real change of character, by which I mean renovation of heart, may be effected, either at so

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early a period, or under such circumstances, as to prevent the change from being immediately obvious, either to the subject of it, or to those around him. Still it is a fact, perfectly well established, that in those Christian countries where the doctrines of religion are fairly exhibited—in our own country, at every period of its history—the gospel has effected in the character of great numbers, an obvious and permanent change. The fact now mentioned, is of as palpable a kind, and as fairly exposed to observation, as any appearance of nature, or as any of those events which are recorded in civil history. Persons, who have been as little restrained by the moral precepts of Christianity, as they were attached to its appropriate sentiments and duties, have manifested an entire change of taste, habits, and character, engaging ardently, and from inclination, in pursuits which they previously viewed, not merely with indifference, but with strong aversion.

But a change of character may be distinctly visible in persons who were never chargeable with habits of vice. Many of this description, are so conscious that their characters are not formed according to the standard of Christianity, that they would be surprised, and perhaps offended, were they suspected of having imbibed the Christian temper. In the minds of many individuals among this class of nominal believers, a change has been produced, scarcely less evident to an attentive observer, than that which we have just described. New views have been obtained as to the condition and responsibility of man, the obligations of virtue, and the whole Christian economy.

That the gospel is entitled to praise for having produced a great melioration of temper and habits in some men of a character decidedly vicious, will perhaps, be granted without seeming reluctance. Such persons need to become, in almost all things, the reverse of what they now are. They ought, indeed, to be made new creatures. In reference to such, who set every principle of virtue at defiance, "old things" should indeed "be done away, and all things should become new." But you are not ready, perhaps, to allow that it redounds to the honor of

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Christianity, to have been instrumental of producing sorrow, penitence, and a broken heart, in persons whose characters have exhibited nothing peculiarly defective or reprehensible. In these instances, it may be, religion appears to you more obtrusive than beneficent, interposing a severe authority, where nothing was wanting but mild correctives.

To this complaint against religion, I would by no means, reply with petulance, or precipitation. If the complaint is well founded, it will endure rational discussion. But if it shuns examination, it should not be reiterated.

What, permit me to ask, are prominent traits in the life of a rational man? Are not these,—that he prefers the greater to the less; that his regard to objects is apportioned to their intrinsic value; that good characters are preferred to bad; and that, among the former, those are most loved whose goodness is preeminent? If these are sound principles, you cannot be misled by any inferences, to which they fairly give rise. From the first of these; namely, the greater is to be preferred to the less, it follows that no man lives a rational life, who does not make the salvation of his soul an object of principal attention. That this is done by all men, who are chargeable with no very distinct breaches of morality, will not, I presume, be asserted. It is a fact, too obvious to require proof, that even among those in whose deportment civil laws find nothing to censure, thousands have almost as little reference to a future state, as if the soul's immortality were not an article of their creed. Far from feeling anxiety as to salvation, they would consider such anxiety as evincing a mind, either inflamed by enthusiasm, or darkened by superstition. Among even those, therefore, whose morals are in no high degree exceptionable, there are many who cannot be said to live conformably to the dictates of reason. Our language is, indeed, much too feeble for the occasion. For what can be more dangerous; what a greater outrage on all principles of prudence and rational self-love, than for a being, conscious of possessing immortal powers, a mind vastly capacious, both of pleasure and pain, to concentrate his affection on a world, which

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he may this night be called to abandon, and contemn that immeasurable existence, which religion has taught him to expect?

It is another trait in the character of a rational man, that his estimate of objects should be apportioned to their value. Is this proof of intellectual sanity wanting to none but those whose lives are polluted with gross profligacy? Consider the nature of those discoveries which religion makes—their purity, their grandeur, and awful sublimity. Consider what is implied in "sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God;" in being associated with "an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect;"—in being admitted to the "presence of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and of God the Judge of all." In addition to this, consider what is implied in the loss of the soul—banishment from God—in "being punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!" Now let what is habitually passing in the mind, and displaying itself in the character of innumerable inoffensive persons of either sex, and of every condition, be compared with that train of thinking and feeling, which corresponds with those solemn, commanding, and absorbing objects, which by the gospel of Christ, are forced upon our observation; and then let any man determine, whether merely an abstinence from palpable vice, necessarily implies a character founded on the basis of reason.

It is further implied in the character of a rational man, that in his estimate of moral beings, the good should be preferred to the bad, and that among the former, those should be most highly esteemed, whose goodness is pre-eminent. One part of the proposition results from the other. If it is reasonable to love virtue, they are to be most loved in whom virtue is most conspicuous. The virtue, that is, the holiness of the Supreme Being, is transcendent and perfect. He is therefore to be regarded not merely with the approbation of the intellect, but with the highest affection of the heart; agreeably to the words of our Saviour: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy

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strength. Now, is a principle of divine love as extensive in its influence on human character, as it is rational in itself? But none, in whom this principle is not predominant, can be said to live rationally.

It has now been proved, I conceive, that many, besides such as have rendered themselves conspicuous for vice, may yet need an alteration of character, a change of heart, or spiritual renovation. Nor is any thing more common than to find individuals of decent deportment and many interesting qualities, who are conscious, nevertheless, of not being actuated by Christian motives,—of not having imbibed the Christian spirit. That power, which belongs to the Christian religion;—that energy, of which our Saviour speaks, when he says, concerning his own doctrines: They are spirit and they are life, is therefore, as truly excellent, though less observable, when it produces affections of piety, in the sinner of more decorous habits, as when the unrestrained profligate renounces, with abhorrence, his accustomed enormities.

We hence perceive, that the evidence, which supports the Christian religion, is abundant and various.

In addition to the miracles, which the Saviour wrought; the prophecies, which were fulfilled in him, or delivered by him, and since accomplished—in addition to all the evidence resulting from the rapid progress, which this religion made, when first promulgated, the reforming influence, which it has had on those who have embraced it, and through their means, on the habits and morals of nations, is, of itself, a distinct proof. In the dawn of the Christian era, to what distant and various nations were the tidings of salvation conveyed! To what multitudes was the arm of the Lord revealed! How great was the change which Christianity effected in those who, in consequence of receiving it, "turned from dumb idols, to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven!" Every instance of real conversion, is fresh proof of the divine commission of Christ—the divine origin of that blessed religion, which thus transforms the heart! Christianity is immutable; its influence is uniform.

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They, who embrace it now, have the same temper and general traits of character, as those to whom the apostolic ministry was made "the power of God unto salvation." The same remark may be applied to all pious Christians who have lived during the intermediate ages. To use the language of the New Testament: They have all drunk of the same Spirit. Now, could we bring into one view, all the vices which Christianity has either suppressed or exterminated, and all the private, social, and public virtues, to which it has given rise in the various nations to which its light has extended, and during the eighteen centuries of its existence on earth, how great would be the mass of evidence hence arising to support its claims to a divine origin! This evidence is perpetually increasing. It is a broad river which widens and deepens in its progress.

We conclude by a few remarks by way of inference and improvement.

1. We perceive the impropriety, not to use severer language, of representing reason and religion, as standing in a hostile attitude in reference to each other. No man lives rationally, we have shown, who does not live piously. Reason and a well instructed conscience, will acquit no person whom religion condemns. The sentence, pronounced at one of these tribunals, is never reversed at the other. At both the sinner meets precisely the same reception. For the truth of this, I might appeal to every person in this assembly, whether saint or sinner. When the Christian finds that the language of Scripture is that of remonstrance, reprehension and terror, in relation to his spiritual sloth, his unchristian feelings, or his undeniable apostasies, does he obtain relief by appealing from her decision, to that of reason and conscience? Does reason approve ingratitude, in one who has been redeemed by the Son of God? Does she approve inaction, insensibility, and a careless deportment, in one who is urged to "fight the good fight of faith," and thus to lay hold on eternal life;—in one, of whom it is said: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father, on his throne? When,

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from the loud remonstrances both of the law and the gospel, the sinner retires in solitude, there to examine his character and life by the standard of reason, are his fears allayed? Are confidence and self-approbation restored? Does his understanding ever take part with him against the oracles of God? The more accurately and profoundly he examines the nature and tendency of a sinful life, in view of the divine law and character—in view of his own dependence—in view of that immeasurable field, which immortality lays open both to his fears and his hopes—in view, both of what he knows as to the frailty of this life, and of what he is taught in religion, as to the duration of another—does the sinner ever feel himself acquitted for his neglect of Christ, and salvation? Does he feel himself justified, as a man—as a rational being? Does he ever come to this conclusion, from a dispassionate view of his powers, relations, and prospects, that whatever be the language of his Creator, in regard to him, it ought to be that of approbation? Recollect the day, or the month, or the year, when, after having been somewhat disquieted by this passage of Scripture: What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul; or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul—upon deliberate examination, you found your mind tranquillized by perceiving, that habitual neglect of God and obedience to your passions, are, in no measure, inconsistent with the reason, dignity, and interest of man. No; a day, when reason condemned religion, or assented to the claims of sensuality, impiety, and unbelief, has not been found in the long era of six thousand years; it will not be found in all the unceasing revolutions of eternity!

2. From the preceding discourse it appears, that they, who are employed in diffusing the light of Christianity, are prosecuting the most noble object. If Christian worship and Christian obedience constitute a reasonable service,—if, in proportion as men become Christians, they return thereby to a state of intellectual and moral soundness, how honorable,—how rational,—how benevolent is that desire, which is now so extensively felt and warmly cherished by the church of God, that the darkness, which

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broods over the pagan nations, may be dispelled, and that light may become resplendent, where it now shines but with tremulous and glimmering ray? Whether we always prosecute this object with right motives, or by the best means, may fairly enough be made a question; but let no man doubt whether the object itself is entitled to human attention—let no man doubt, that it would justify, nay, that it imperiously demands far greater exertions, than those which the Christian world is now making to accomplish it. It is the same object for which the Son of God became incarnate—and for which his apostles encountered all the labors and perils of their arduous ministration!

3. If the truth of Christianity is shown by its legitimate moral effects, we perceive how much the interests of religion are affected by the character of those who profess themselves its votaries. In no unimportant sense, my brethren, every Christian is placed on missionary ground. Within the sphere of his influence are many, who live "without hope, and without God in the world." If, in his disposition and habits the temper of Christ is rendered conspicuous, it will be likely to produce alarm and conviction, in those who are conscious of irreligion. Here is a kind of missionary service, to which we are bound, permit me to say, even more strongly than to any other. To send preachers among the destitute, whether at home or abroad, becomes a duty only in reference to the end to be accomplished; whereas the general virtues of a Christian life, besides being conducive to a similar end, possess inherent excellence, and are of eternal and immutable obligation. It was, therefore, with good reason that our Saviour said: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven.

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ADDRESS ON INTEMPERANCE.*

Gentlemen of the Massachusetts Society for suppressing Intemperance,

Strongly impressed with the conviction, that a deep interest ought to be excited on the present occasion, I rise under the disheartening consciousness of being able to say nothing, which has not been already presented to your reflections.

On the subject of intemperance, obvious facts first excited alarm; alarm produced inquiry; and inquiry served but to increase the alarm. These facts, together with calculations founded upon them, have been, in various ways, laid before the public, that the excitement, so justly produced, might not only be maintained, but lead to such counsels and systematical efforts, as the occasion demands. All mention of these facts, notwithstanding their present notoriety, I know not how to avoid. Like the great disclosures made by revelation, they must be perpetually displayed, as motives to action and perseverance. They are among the reasons, which led to the establishment of this society. They are of such a kind, as to justify us in what we have done; and to condemn us, I fear, for what we have neglected. Facts are of a nature, imperishable and immutable; they can neither be annihilated nor changed. Whatever inferences fairly result from them, may, under like circumstances, be a thousand times drawn, and will forever be entitled to the same regard.

* This Address was delivered before the Mass. Society for suppressing Intemperance, at their Annual Meeting, May, 1816.

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The extent to which intemperance prevails in our country, can scarcely now be considered a subject of conjecture; it having been ascertained, with sufficient exactness, from well authenticated documents. From such documents it has been made to appear that, unless a reformation has been effected within a few years, by coalitions for the suppression of vice, or by the circumstances of the nation, the yearly expenditure for ardent spirits in our country, will, at a moderate estimate, amount to thirty-three millions of dollars. Should it be granted that eight millions of this sum are necessarily expended, there will still be a yearly waste of twenty-five millions. The resources of that nation must indeed be ample, in whose finances so enormous a loss would not be sensibly felt. Regarding the subject then merely in relation to political economy, the suppression of intemperance imperiously claims the attention of the statesman and patriot.

But this diminution of wealth, vast as it really is, may be regarded, perhaps, as among the most moderate even of the political evils, resulting from the vice, whose suppression we are attempting. If we estimate this enormous sum merely as a loss, our calculation will be materially incorrect. That mass of ardent spirits for which it is paid, becomes a subtle and powerful agent in relaxing the morals, and prostrating the physical strength of its consumers; in which number are many, from whom the country might expect useful labors in peace, and honorable services in war.

Again, it must be considered that the strength of a nation does not consist merely in sinews, bones, and muscles. The same quantity of physical power, will be more or less efficient in proportion to the confidence, union, and wisdom, with which it is exerted. A small number, well united, will accomplish more, than a much greater number under the influence of mutual jealousy. But union and confidence can be supported on no other foundation, than that of moral principle. This is the potent ligature, by which the various parts are reduced to the most advantageous and beautiful order, and preserved in their

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respective places. Now, as intemperance is the voluntary subjugation of reason to appetite, it deadens moral sensibility, and obliterates all distinction between virtue and vice.

Three ways have now been specified, in which, as a nation, we are enfeebled by an intemperate use of ardent spirits; first, in the term of four years, it produces a waste of property, to the amount of a hundred millions; secondly, powers, whether bodily or intellectual, are enfeebled by it to such a degree, as to be rendered incapable of those services and efforts, which might otherwise be calculated upon with confidence; thirdly, by corrupting the public morals, it relaxes or dissolves the only bond, which can retain in one compact, well organized mass, the discordant materials of which society is composed. The last is probably a greater evil, even in a political point of view, than either of the preceding.

Hitherto we have not contemplated the effect which intemperance has in shortening human life. On this subject it is indeed impossible to make an accurate calculation. But if we consider that variety of ways, in which it occasions death, the whole number of victims will appear great. Need I mention that broils and affrays, resulting from inebriation, often result either in mortal wounds or immediate death—that many who suffer capital punishment, under the hands of public justice, committed their crimes when liquor had subdued their reason, and inflamed their passions? Need I attempt to enumerate all that variety of fatal casualties, from which persons in this condition are never secure? They may be consumed by the fire, plunged in the water, stiffened by the cold, trampled on by their own domestic animals, which they are no longer able to command, or crushed by the carriage of the unobserving passenger.

In all these instances, the attack made by death, is furious; and the conquest is soon gained. Others he subdues by regular, gradual advances. By these, liquor is first taken incautiously, next intemperately—the habit is fastened upon them; the whole system is disordered and debilitated; the mental powers decay somewhat more rapidly than those of the body; and,

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therefore, the animal, neither human, nor wholly brutal, may, for a short time survive the man.

Among those who die thus sinfully and dishonorably, may be found, as has been already suggested, many on whom their friends and society in general had high claims—men, who once had it in their power to serve their families and their country, and, perhaps, for a time, yielded such service, not only by bodily strength and activity, but by intellectual powers of no ordinary worth. In this number are found not only some of the lowest forms, that human nature ever assumes, but merchants, scholars, physicians, counsellors, statesmen; and, it is painful to add, some, who once presented the oblations of Christian assemblies before the throne of the Eternal.

When we consider how various are the ways in which intemperance shortens human life, and reflect on the enormous consumption of ardent spirits in our country, we shall hardly consider that computation as immoderate, by which the yearly victims of this vice are estimated at six thousand. In addition to this, it has been often observed, that many of the deaths, which in bills of mortality, are attributed to other causes, were indirectly the result of intemperance; as hereby the animal system was predisposed to be acted upon by ordinary maladies. By the intervention of these, the patient is saved the discredit of dying in consequence of habitual inebriation. The remark which the Psalmist makes in regard to transgressors in general, has therefore peculiar emphasis, when applied to the drunkard: Evil doers shall be cut off. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. He shall fly away as a dream; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

Let us next consider the difficulty of reclaiming those who have already formed habits of intemperate drinking.

We were, indeed, shown at our last anniversary, by the exhibition of some very interesting facts, that reformation is not impossible. I rejoice that this point is capable of being so satisfactorily established. I am grateful to any person who collects

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and communicates remarks on such a subject. We are hereby taught that intemperance and reprobation are not precisely the same, and that he who is guilty of the one, is not quite as certain of perdition, as he who has already been sentenced to the other. Even this should prevent absolute despondency. Even this should induce the benevolent, assiduously and perseveringly to use, for reclaiming the intemperate, every means which may be suggested by religion, science, or worldly prudence.

But, while we are gratified at being assured that the condition of the intemperate man is not perfectly desperate, it is impossible not to be struck with the paucity of these facts, which show it to be otherwise. Much inquiry, joined to critical observation, will indeed, furnish us with a few instances in which reason has resumed her empire over debauched appetite. But it requires no strong powers of recollection, no ingenious investigation, to find facts of an opposite description. Unsought, they present themselves to the mind in frightful abundance.

The difficulty of subduing a propensity to immoderate drinking, is known by painful experience to many persons, in capacity of parent, brother, or friend. Parents may view with more indulgence than alarm, occasional irregularities in a favorite son. By a repetition of these, some uneasiness is produced in spite of parental partiality. They begin with suggesting cautions, rise to mild remonstrance, and as the case becomes more urgent, they make warm and reiterated appeals to his regard to interest, his love of character, his affection for them, his sense of moral obligation, and the well known effect of irregular habits in shortening human life. They flatter themselves, that all these efforts are not abortive. Some tender emotions, some ingenuous relentings are perceived. These are gladly hailed as the witnesses of penitence, and the harbingers of reformation. Hopes thus suddenly formed, are found to be premature. The anxiety of the parents is renewed and augmented by recent evidence of profligacy in the son. To reclaim him, their affection prompts them to make new exertions—to repeat arguments, which have hitherto been found ineffectual—to exhibit these in new and va-

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rious connexions. From remonstrance they proceed to entreaty, to supplication, and tears. The old bow before the young; the innocent pray to the guilty.

As a last expedient, they will change his place of residence. New scenes and new companions may be more propitious to virtue; at least they will exhibit fewer temptations to vice. The experiment is made, and with apparent success. His mind is so occupied with new associations, as for a time, to yield little attention to the cravings of appetite. His friends again indulge a trembling hope, that, notwithstanding past irregularities, all may yet be well. Delightful, but vain illusion! The novelty gradually disappears; but the strength of inclination is unsubdued. The taste, which has been so unhappily formed, is now incorporated into his constitution—it has become a permanent part of his character; it is always ready to be acted upon, when circumstances are presented, favorable to its indulgence. He becomes callous to shame, and deaf to remonstrance. Or, if there are some remains of moral sensibility, to avoid the stings of solitary reflection, he seeks relief in the excitement produced by dissipation. That which he denominates pleasure, is nothing but a tumultuous agitation of the passions. As if visited by the curse of Kehama, "there is fire in his heart, and fire in his brain."

I once knew a young man of reputable connexions, and of more than ordinary powers of mind, who, conscious that he was verging towards intemperance, commenced his professional studies in a place where rural scenes, and the prevailing state of morals, seemed well calculated to cherish sobriety, and repress vice. He profited by his situation, and imagined that his good resolutions were gaining strength. At one disastrous hour, being visited by some of his former associates, he consented to renew, for once, the scenes of their former conviviality. Excessive indulgence was the result. The hours of returning sobriety were spent in self-reproach. He justly considered his recent defection as a fatal crisis in his probation. Having no longer any confidence in himself, and thinking it useless to contend, he yielded to inclination, and became its unresisting captive.

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Of the sufferings endured by the parent of an intemperate son, that cruel suspense already suggested, is not the least. His expectations, which, to-day are gathering strength, will be dead to-morrow. With tormenting rapidity, he passes from hope to fear, and from fear to hope. Nor because it will be unavailing, can he divest himself of all anxiety. Natural affection prevents it. He is therefore chained to a load, which is always ready to recoil upon him.

In the case which has been supposed, the disease was not suffered to become inveterate, before remedies were applied. Proportionably greater will be the difficulty of recovery, should the disorder be confirmed by long indulgence. To reclaim the inveterate drunkard, reason acknowledges the inadequacy of her powers. The object of reasoning is to produce conviction. But the sinner in question is convinced already. With intentions, the purity of which he cannot call in question, you remind him of his estate, already embarrassed and partially squandered; of his family, either corrupted or impoverished, degraded, mortified, and comfortless—of his limbs, become feeble and tremulous—of his countenance, inflamed, disfigured, and rendered at once the hideous image of sin and death; and of many, whom habits similar to his own, have brought prematurely to the grave; remind him, that in the death of these he has a sure and direful presage of his own. In aid of all these motives, appeal to his faith in revelation; point out to him that terrific sentence, which declares that no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God;—what have you gained by all this array of motives? He acknowledges that your arguments are conclusive, and that your remonstrances are rational and weighty. He weeps under the mingled influence of terror and self-reproach. Without being able to hide from his eyes the precipice before him, he advances towards it with tottering, but accelerated steps. The grave, ever insatiable, is prepared for him. It shrouds him from every eye but that of his Maker.

No one will imagine, it is hoped, that my object in thus pre-

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senting the difficulty of reclaiming men from habitual inebriation, is to discourage the attempt. The possibility of such a reformation has been proved, and is therefore undeniable. But to the successful issue of an arduous enterprise, it is necessary that its nature should be fully known. The efforts employed may thus correspond with the resistance to be overcome. As Christians, but especially as members of this society, we are bound to use all lawful measures for weakening and subduing those habits of intemperance, which are already formed. Judicious exertions of this kind, if long continued, can hardly fail of producing some salutary effect. But to cherish virtue is easier than to subdue vice. We may do much more in preventing bad habits, than in restoring good ones. Our object is rather to operate on the sound parts of society, than on those which are sickly and decaying. And the difficulty, the almost insuperable difficulty of reforming men habitually intemperate, is surely the best reason on earth, why we should, if possible, prevent them from becoming so.

To give particular directions on this subject, will not be attempted. Some general remarks may not, perhaps, be thought foreign to the occasion.

Any peculiar fondness for inebriating liquor, or for the society of those who use it freely, especially when exhibited by the young, ought to create alarm. Smaller aberrations from the rules of rigid temperance are viewed by some parents, as excusable on the score of youth;—by others, as indications of spirit and sensibility. Extravagant severity may, doubtless, produce the same unhappy result, as the opposite extreme, and therefore, ought not to be commended. But parental indulgence is never more obviously misplaced, than in the cases now supposed. The parent may be perfectly right, in attributing that moderate delinquency, which he has observed in his son, to youth, or to an excess of social feelings. In estimating the moral quality of the action, these circumstances are entitled to consideration. But, viewed in respect to a future habit, they should do nothing

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toward allaying parental fears. The same cause, which has produced intemperance once, may do it again. It is the constitution of our nature, that an action should be repeated with greater facility and less reluctance, than it was first performed; and that this facility, or diminished reluctance should be proportionate to the frequency of the repetition. But intemperance is not changed either as to its nature or effects, because it may have originated in youth or have been induced by excess in some of the better passions. If a young man possesses generosity, frankness, and social feelings, the greater pity, that these should contribute even indirectly to his present dishonor, and his final perdition.

Our estimate of habits and actions is, in no small degree, dependent on the manner, in which they are mentioned by persons, in whose judgment and character we place confidence. There are those, whose opinions on human conduct are forming under our influence. The remark is emphatical in regard to our children and immediate connexions. But it can be said of few men, and surely not of those who compose this society, that the effect of their opinions and conversation is confined to their own families. Instances of intoxication or intemperate drinking should not be mentioned with levity, or in such a manner, as to indicate little or no disapprobation of the crime. It is related by Tacitus in praise of the ancient Germans, that, among them, it was never customary to treat vice with raillery.*

If satire can ever be advantageously employed for the suppression of vice, it must exhibit the solemn indignation of Juvenal, and not the relaxing urbanity of Horace. It must never leave us in doubt, whether to smile at the sinner, or participate his crimes. Nothing can render it consistent for us to act, as members of this society, but a conviction, that intemperance is a heinous offence, both against the public and against God. Our manner of speaking, and all our united exertions on this subject, should correspond with such a conviction.

But, of all the ways, in which the great object of our society

* Nemo illic vitia ridet. Tac. de Mor. Germ.

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may be promoted, none is so certainly and extensively effectual, as the propagation of moral sentiments and feelings. To expect extermination of particular vices, where there is no firm, rational, and impressive belief in a divine moral government and a just retribution, is to anticipate a rich harvest from fields not enclosed. Annoying animals, if expelled to-day, will return to-morrow. If the growth is secured from one species, it may be devoured by another. The summer passes in fruitless labor, and the autumn witnesses disappointed hopes. Deep rooted moral principle is to the character, what pales and hedges are to cultivated grounds. It stands a faithful guardian both by night and day, and is equally effectual against every intruder. Men whose general deportment indicates a yielding morality, are under great disadvantage for suppressing particular vices. If we are chargeable with indifference to virtue, or to those measures and efforts, which tend to advance it, we demolish the most substantial barrier not only against intemperance, but against vices still more enormous. Every person, on the other hand, contributes indirectly, but with certain effect, to the great object, for which we have associated, who cultivates personal sobriety and the principles of religion, and who honors "those institutions, which have been established for improving the morals of the people, and training our youth to knowledge and virtue."

Gentlemen, permit me to remind you, how much the success of every enterprise depends on the perseverance of those who are engaged in it. Whatever confidence arises from the consciousness of being engaged in a good cause, we have an undeniable right to enjoy. It is the cause not merely of Christian instructors, but of philosophers, of legislators, of all honorable, and virtuous men, whatever may have been their age or country. It is a cause patronized by Deity himself, the final triumph of which is not more doubtful, than his existence and moral perfections. It becomes us indeed, to examine the motives by which we are actuated in every attempt to raise the standard of public morals; but all who endeavor this, with feelings worthy

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of the object, will be acknowledged, to use the words of inspiration, as fellow workers together with God, and will share in the honors of that day, when peace in the universe shall be established; when the long conflict shall be decided between reason, order, and piety on the one side, and passion, selfishness, and moral uproar on the other.

But, in such a cause, it may be asked, why we do not witness more present success. I fear, Gentlemen, that this question is too easily answered. Our success is perhaps now in higher proportion to our endeavors, than these are to the object in view. When exertions to suppress intemperance shall have been made for many years, with ardor, tempered by deliberation and sound judgment, and with something of that stubborn perseverance, with which men are wont to pursue their private advantage, it will be in season, should there be occasion for it, to complain of our ill success. The fact unhappily is, that when we first engage in any object of public utility, there is a preternatural excitement produced, which is followed by correspondent languor. And we are in danger of spending the remainder of our days in refreshing our exhausted spirits, and in complaining that nothing great or good can be effected in such a world as ours.

I am far from believing, however, that the general good, which has resulted from societies for suppressing intemperance, is inconsiderable. Many established drunkards may not, indeed, have been reclaimed to sobriety. But, that the unnecessary, and therefore, injurious consumption of ardent spirits, among persons who were never intemperate, has been essentially diminished, is a fact, of which we can have no doubt. The importance of this fact is seldom duly appreciated. In consequence of it, many expenses have been prevented among those, who could ill encounter them; and habits have been seasonably interrupted, which would have issued in customary inebriation. It may be a more splendid feat to recover a post, than maintain it; but surely the latter is not less conducive to a happy termination of the war.

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The object of our union is to discountenance and suppress, not only the use of ardent spirits, but likewise its kindred vices, profaneness and gaming.

There is no measure so effectual, it has been observed, for exterminating particular vices, as to strengthen moral feelings and principles. Whatever tends to subvert these principles and deaden these feelings, we are bound, therefore, uniformly and perseveringly to oppose. In the whole dark catalogue of human vices, there is none, which tends to this, with more fatal effect, than the customary use of profane language. The enormity of this crime, considered in a religious point of view, might better be discussed on a more solemn occasion. We now speak of it only as it affects civil society and social order. Instead of detaining you, by showing, which might easily be done, how this crime tends to debase the whole moral character, by breaking that golden chain let down from heaven to earth, to connect man with the Author of his being, I would respectfully appeal to every person present;—I appeal to those especially, who sustain the honorable relation of parents or guardians to the rising generation. Are you willing, that your sons and your daughters should form their characters under the influence, and in imitation, of those, who avow their disregard to revelation, by speaking contemptuously of its rewards and punishments? Are you willing to contemplate them, as future members of the community, impatient of order, hostile to restraint, and to all Christian establishments,—to every thing indeed, which sober, rational, and virtuous men have deemed precious and venerable;—all, that is secure, or stable, or lovely in the social state, and all, that is august, or blissful, and holy beyond the grave?

On the contrary, if this earth can be the scene of any delightful visions, they are those presented to the mind of that parent, who, in looking forward to a period, subsequent to his own death, sees his descendants, whether in retired or prominent stations, the friends of domestic virtue, of liberty, of law, and religion; loving their families and their country, and cher-

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ishing Christianity, not only as that instrument, which conveys to good men the *heavenly inheritance*, but as forming a fundamental part of the civil constitution, under which they live.

Permit me, Gentlemen, to close, by reminding you and myself of what we ought never to forget. Whatever is to be done for society, for the interests of virtue, and for the honor of God, must be done speedily. This consideration is forced upon our minds, by the recent and much lamented death of that distinguished citizen,* who first presided in this society;—a citizen, whose powerful and splendid talents were exciting interest, not only in this Commonwealth, but in the centre of our confederated republic. The Lord hath taken away "the honorable man, the counsellor, and the eloquent orator."† Let us heed the solemn warning, and look forward to the day of eternal retribution. "Behold, I come quickly," saith the Divine Author of our religion, "my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be."

* Hon. Samuel Dexter. † Isaiah 3: 3.

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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.*

THE DANGERS OF A COLLEGE LIFE, AND ITS SECURITY.

I AM not solicitous, that the present should be termed a theological lecture. It will have for its immediate object no individual doctrine of Christianity; but that general regularity of life, which, as students in science and literature, and believers in revealed religion, you are bound to maintain.

I shall first enumerate some of the dangers of a collegial life; secondly, consider in what way you may obtain the greatest security in the midst of them.

Under the first division, I observe, that one of the dangers to which literary youth are exposed, arises from the opinion, that the standard of morals is not to all persons the same, and that in regard to the students of a college, the laws of revealed religion are either repealed, or rendered more lenient. That such a sentiment, if not avowed, is secretly entertained, appears from this circumstance, that practices, which in other situations are universally condemned as immoral, are sometimes viewed by associated literary young men with little or no displeasure.

If such a sentiment is cherished by any, I fear indeed that the error is invincible. That want of thought which gave rise to it, will probably render ineffectual any efforts of mine for its removal. It is doubtless true that the external duties of a statesman are different from those of the soldier—that the external

* Although this Lecture and the following one formed a part of the regular theological course, yet their character justifies their being introduced in their present connexion.

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duties of the physician are different from those of the artificer; that is, the same moral principle, piety to God, and benevolence to man, would require different actions of persons, whose conditions in life were so various; because the virtue and happiness of the great mass may be most effectually advanced by sedulous attention to their respective employments. But persons in neither of the situations mentioned, can be at liberty to lose sight of these great objects. The artificer is as really bound to relieve a neighbor in distress, as the physician to administer cordials. And if the soldier has no right to turn his arms against the State, neither has the politician to concert plans for its ruin.

The obligations of veracity, justice, and temperance, are on all equally binding. The statesman and the soldier are not less the creatures of God, than the artist or the cottager. They have the same origin, and the same relation to their Creator. The same dispositions towards the Deity and his creatures are required of both. If the soul of one man is immortal, the soul of another is not less so. If there be a retribution, which reason renders probable, and revelation makes certain, it must in relation to all men, proceed on the same principles.

These remarks, which relate to persons in different employments, are equally applicable to those in various stages of life. Whenever we acquire such intellectual powers as render us accountable, the obligations of morality can neither be violated nor neglected with impunity. If our opportunities for mental cultivation be somewhat more favorable than those of others, our relations and consequent duties may be better known, and all immorality is the more irrational, criminal and dangerous. There is the same standard of morality to the rustic youth, inured to manual labor, and to the young gentleman, whose better fortune is opening to him the treasures of science and literature; with this difference, that the obligations of morality are more easily, and more accurately known in one case than in the other.

It may be added that collegial pursuits give no assurance of long life; so that if it be in general a matter of prudence, to look beyond the narrow limits of our earthly existence, and to con-

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sider the eternal consequences of virtue and vice, such anticipations imperiously demand a place among those varied employments which occupy your time. While you have the honor to be ranked with the intelligent and immortal part of the universe, and while you recollect that no revolutions of years or ages will be able to extinguish that intellectual spark, which the Creator has placed within you, do not forget that this spark will soon kindle into the clear and resplendent glow of the seraph, or into those flames of hatred, and malice, and rage, that will eternally torment the reprobate.

Another danger to which students in a public seminary are exposed, arises from the want of firmness, independence, and a sense of individual responsibility. By firmness I do not mean a pertinacious adherence to opinions hastily formed—by independence I do not mean a disregard to reason, just laws, and sober maxims. All this, instead of indicating an independent mind, gives evidence of abject servility. The laws of fitness and reason are obeyed by the most excellent, the most powerful and the most happy beings in the universe. Not only the best and wisest men, and superior created intelligences, but God himself acts under their influence. He never adopts a measure merely because he has power to effect it, but solely because his wisdom and goodness require its adoption. All which renders the character of God lovely, consists in his uniformly and perpetually regarding the laws of benevolence and reason. This is the noblest, the most exalted, and most perfect character of which we can form any conception; and is therefore attributed to the Supreme Being. On the contrary, intellectual nature can never appear in deeper degradation, than when those who possess it are slaves to inclination—perpetually obedient to the blind impulse of passion.

That want of independence of which I speak, and which I conceive is by no means uncommon in public seminaries, is displayed in too great a regard to the practices and opinions of others, when one's own judgment and convictions are on the other side. This is in fact, for an individual to annihilate himself

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as a distinct being, and to attach himself, as a kind of excrescence, to the general mass. It would be easy to show that such compliance is morally wrong, that it is dangerous and impolitic.

That must under all circumstances, be morally wrong, which is inconsistent with our own convictions of duty. If I perform an action, convinced that it is wrong, I intend to do a wrong action. And though it should afterwards be shown that the action was in itself right, and though it might have been innocently performed by another, my intention makes it wrong in me, and of course brings guilt upon the conscience. How much more, if the action be obviously and decidedly inconsistent with that sobriety and virtue which our Creator demands.

Such a compliance is not only wrong in a moral view, but is peculiarly dangerous. The public interest is in a most precarious and threatening state, when there are not among those who are best informed, men of stable, unyielding principle, men who will stand erect, whether the pressure of public opinion bear light or heavy. But characters of this compact, unyielding texture are not formed in a moment. They are the result of principle confirmed by habit. These habits must commence at an early period. If persons at the age of fifteen or twenty, allow themselves to proceed, subservient to the dictates of others, in opposition to their own conviction of right and duty, they will probably have the same compliant morality at the age of twenty-five or thirty. If a youth is ready to sacrifice conscience to the habits of that little community which exists in a college, what should prevent him from making the same sacrifice, when he mixes with the world and engages in employments of more import to the public?

Further, this yielding temper of which I speak, is not only dangerous, as it contributes to a habit of acting without principle; it is likewise impolitic. This want of independence is, in truth, the want of integrity. It is possible, indeed, for a man to be greatly dependent on others for his opinions, through diffidence of his own judgment. This is hardly what we should expect from persons of strong intellect; but it may be perfectly consistent with

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innocence and probity. But the want of independence now under consideration, is a readiness to act in compliance with custom, contrary to the convictions of one's own mind. The want of probity, implied in such compliance, is perceived even by them to whose habits and wishes the sacrifice is made.—They may praise you; but be assured they will never esteem you for such complaisance. Whereas the person who has decision of character, and boldly refuses what his conscience condemns, is sure of the secret veneration of those who are too unprincipled to imitate his virtue.

As another reason why this subserviency to the habits of others is impolitic, I mention its tendency to present uneasiness. Few things are more inconsistent with self-enjoyment than suspense and irresolution. From this state of mind every person whether old or young, who acts upon principle, is set free, as soon as he discovers what integrity and virtue demand. But persons of a different description, have within themselves, no criterion of action. They are, by consequence, in suspense, until they can learn the wishes and practice of others. This is, in many cases, no easy matter. And should the majority settle down on a side opposite their own; or in other words, should they themselves form a determination too soon, the ground at first taken, must be relinquished, and that too under the semblance of conviction. For, whatever be the fact, few persons have hardiness to acknowledge that they have no principle, but that exemplifying what perhaps is only fabled of the camelion, they assume the color of the last object with which they come in contact.

I would by no means be understood to encourage a deportment morose or repulsive. When compliance with the desires or habits of others certainly involves neither immorality nor indecorum, civility requires it. And though your refusal to do that which conscience condemns, should be intelligible and decisive, it need not be angry or opprobrious. The *suaviter in modo*, is by no means inconsistent with the *fortiter in re*. Let each person consider himself as individually accountable to his

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Maker, and, with unvarying resolution, tempered with mildness, follow that course which such a relation demands.

The use of profane language is an evil spreading so widely, as to justify the apprehension that our literary institutions are not exempt from it. There are two points of view in which this practice may be considered;—first, that of indecorum; secondly, that of impiety. As to indecorum, though this vice is occasionally discovered in the unprincipled of every rank in society, to ascertain where it most prevails is no difficult matter. Associate with the lowest forms of human nature—with those who have either none, or a precarious occupation—with those who, on account of indolence, instability, or vice, can appropriate no place as their home or country—and, with the language of vulgarity and wretchedness, you are sure to witness a strong mixture of profaneness. If you then resort to the work-shop of the industrious artificer, the dwelling of the reputable yeoman, the counting-house of the well informed merchant, or to the abodes of professional eminence, with a different kind of people, you anticipate a different dialect. It occasions surprise, if among such people, your ears are assailed with the language of the dock, the camp, or the ale-house.

But the indecorum of profaneness is but a feeble reason against it, if compared with that which arises from its impiety. If religion is not a baseless fabric—if there is any solidity in its first principles—if there is a supreme intelligent Being, and a future state, the practice of which I am speaking, must in a very high degree be impious and daring. Those who indulge themselves in it, (if indulgence it may be called,) render common and ineffectual the most solemn and august ideas, that ever have entered, or ever can enter the human mind. Such are ideas of God and of future reward and punishment. It is strictly and philosophically true, you well know, that God fills not only heaven and earth, but is excluded from no portion of unlimited space—that every orb and every system is regulated by his power—that universal annihilation would result from the momentary withdrawment of his sustaining energy—and that he

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has a perfect, intuitive knowledge of all the parts contained in every world. The purity, benevolence, and justice of this Being are not less perfect, than his physical attributes. Does your reason hesitate a single moment to decide that such a name cannot, without a crime, be used with levity?

It is impossible that any doctrine should be so interesting to man, or so interesting in its result, as that of eternal judgment.

There is the greatest impropriety, not to say absurdity, in mingling together trivial and important subjects in common discourse. Suppose a person should habitually contrive to present to your mind, in company with ludicrous or trifling ideas, others either of a solemn or painful nature, such as that of a dying man, a weeping family, a besieged town reduced by famine to the last extremity, or of a ship's crew in expectation of being absorbed in the next series of billows—three things you would immediately perceive; first, a great degree of pain in your own minds, from the concurrence of objects so dissimilar and opposite; secondly, that the person choosing to unite such objects in his own mind, must possess a kind of horrible insensibility; and thirdly, frequently to hear such conversation, and to look on a picture in which such discordant objects were portrayed, would gradually destroy humane feelings, and deaden the charities of life. But the profane person does more than this. He unites the idea of God, with ideas which are common, trifling, and ridiculous. He throws into the same picture the ludicrous occurrences of a day, and the sufferings of eternity. All restraints from vice, arising from belief in God and a retribution, are enfeebled just in proportion to his success in bringing others to resemble himself. He is answerable, therefore, not only for his own impiety, but for that general immorality which results from his influence on others. Whether he belongs to a small or a great community—whether his mind is imbecile or powerful, the tendency of his profaneness is to destroy those principles on which rest the security and happiness of man in a social state, to annihilate the moral sense, and to render him depraved and wretched in all the stages of his future being.

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A further danger, to which youth, associated for literary purposes are exposed, is that of dissipation. By dissipation I mean waste of time, occasional indolence, suffering the mind to wander from those objects which ought to confine it, and a criminal indulgence of the appetites. That this is wrong in a moral or religious view, is too obvious to admit serious doubt. God who gives and continues human life, requires that we use it to good purpose—that we cultivate our mental powers, and apply them to those objects for which they are adapted—for which they were bestowed. He requires that we govern our appetites and maintain uniform sobriety and temperance.

Nor is it more certain that every species of dissipation militates with moral duty, than that its effects are unfavorable to the acquirement of knowledge. In proportion as your intellectual powers are at your own command, in proportion to your ability of directing them to what object you please; the less they are disturbed or obscured by passion or licentiousness; clearness will be acquired to your perception, soundness to your judgment, and strength to your memory. But all indolence and disorder, all indulgence, either of the angry or licentious passions, tend to dissipate the thoughts, and to enfeeble the powers of perceiving and discriminating.

Having mentioned in general, the dangers to which you are exposed, I would indicate in a few words, by what means you may be rendered most secure in the midst of them. This security arises from a habit of acting from principle. You well know, that nothing more severe can be said of a man, than that he acts without principle. *Unprincipled* and *worthless* are epithets which we unite merely for the purpose of expressing the same thing more strongly. We never suppose that the latter contains anything more than the former. Now if an unprincipled man be worthless, so is an unprincipled youth. Nay, there are many men of this description, who in youth were not so. Of course, if persons are rendered immoral in early life, there is reason to apprehend, that in subsequent years their profli-

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gacy will become pre-eminent. If acting from principle is so important, let us see what is implied in it.

When we speak of a man as acting from principle, we do not mean that human estimation is the rule of his conduct. That the approbation of discerning and good men is desirable cannot be questioned. But even their approbation, imperfect as they are, is not your standard. Much less are you so to regard the fluctuating opinion of the majority. If such were your criterion, what is right to-day might be wrong to-morrow. No man, I apprehend, who is conscious of much integrity, or even supposes himself in much repute, would be willing to have it thought that no higher motive than the love of popularity governed his life.

Neither is he to be considered as acting from principle, whose deportment is governed by present interest. The only occasion on which such a man can be trusted, is when your own interest and that of the public are not only consentaneous with his, but believed by himself to be thus consentaneous. What then are we to say of the man of mere sensibility and good nature? Is he to be considered as a man of principle? Doubtless these qualities do not entitle him to that honor. His sensibility to one object may lead him to practise injustice towards another. The good nature of a judge may acquit a culprit, to the disturbance and terror of the public. The man who has no other guide but his feelings, can never be entitled to general confidence, because we can never know in what direction these will carry him.

In a principle of honor, you imagine, perhaps, that there is permanence and uniformity. If by honor you mean moral rectitude, it is undoubtedly both uniform and permanent. But if you mean a regard to reputation, it is subject to all the changes of public opinion. And the man, who is thus honorable, stands ready for any crime, as soon as the public sentiment is sufficiently corrupt to approve it.

Independently of our choice,—independently of the choice of angels, or of any being in the universe, there are such things as truth and error, moral rectitude and moral obliquity. The nature of these can neither be altered nor confounded. Should

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the most elevated of creatures, or even were it possible, should the Deity himself choose and proceed in opposition to that eternal rectitude, which it is the glory of his character to have maintained, still, that which is wrong would never become right; neither would that which is right ever become wrong. In truth and morals, there is perfect immutability.

Now he who acts from principle, has regard to this unchangeable rectitude;— that rule, with which the proceedings of angels and of God are in perpetual unison. By this have been influenced all, who have deserved reputation in this world, or who will enjoy it in the next. This will preserve you from indolence, instability, and profaneness, from licentiousness, and dishonor. It will give you confidence before men, and humble hope in the day of final retribution. For though "by the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified," it is the gracious establishment of Christianity, that the offences of all, who possess this inward rectitude, this holiness of temper, shall be freely pardoned at the day of judgment.

I conclude this lecture in the well known words of Dr. Price: "Virtue is of intrinsic value and of indispensable obligation; not the creature of will, but necessary and immutable; not local and temporary, but of equal extent with the divine mind; not a mode of sensation, but everlasting truth; not dependent on power, but the guide of all power. Virtue is the foundation of honor and esteem. The use of it is not confined to any one stage of our existence, nor to any particular situation, but reaches through all periods and circumstances of our being. Many of the endowments and talents, which we now possess, and of which we are too apt to be proud, will cease entirely with the present state; but this will be our ornament and dignity in every future state, to which we may be removed. Beauty and wit will die; learning will vanish away, and all the arts of life be soon forgot; but virtue will remain forever.—One virtuous disposition of soul is preferable to the greatest accomplishments and abilities, and of more value, than all the treasures of the world. If you are wise, then, study virtue, and contemn every

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thing, which comes in competition with it. Remember, that nothing else deserves one anxious thought or wish. Remember, that this alone is honor, glory, wealth, and happiness. Secure this, and you secure every thing; lose this, and all is lost."

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LECTURE ON THE VALUE OF TIME.

For the present lecture I have not taken a subject, which, if we speak with accuracy, ought to be denominated theological. My object is by a plain and practical address, to enforce the necessity of making a sedulous use of your time.

However difficult it may be for a philosopher to give a satisfactory definition of this term, the difficulty seems not to be attended with any practical inconvenience. The importance, and, if the language be permitted, the efficiency of time, are too obvious to be concealed or called in question. By its agency, infantile weakness is exchanged for the stature and strength of manhood, and these are succeeded by the deformity and decrepitude of age. Rich establishments and large possessions are the result of time; whose ability to dissolve, dissipate and destroy, is not less than its power to create, adorn, and establish. To some it brings learning, influence, and character; while from others it wrests every possession, and spares not even hope itself. Ages are formed by accumulated years; and ages give existence, form, and stability to nations and governments, or they change and annihilate those which are already established.

When we say that all these changes are the effect of time, it is evident that we speak in figurative language. Time of itself can do nothing. Every change is effected by some intelligent agent. Those changes which have been mentioned, are the result of human efforts, employed for certain periods. Character is formed by a series of actions. Knowledge is obtained by mental application. Wealth is acquired by activity, discretion, and perseverance. Political establishments are formed from exten-

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sive views of the nature of man, and the relations of human society. It is not the existence, therefore, but the improvement of time, to which we can attribute all changes and all events.

Hence it appears why greater importance is attached to some periods of life than to others. Existence itself, that is, the duration of an object, is not susceptible of any change. Its value can be altered only by the circumstances under which it is enjoyed. Why are the years of infancy less precious than those of youth or manhood? For this reason only, that the infant is not capable of such exertions, either of body or mind, as can be made with much facility by those who are further advanced in age. For a similar reason, that part of life is most valuable, in which advantages for intellectual and moral improvement, or for beneficent exertion, are possessed in greatest abundance.

When you look abroad on that part of the world which is subject to your remark, you perceive a striking diversity of condition and character. Some men have their minds disciplined, and their manners softened; others continue in the ignorance and rudeness of nature. Some are justly the objects of confidence and love; while others are viewed with hatred or suspicion. Many, by their knowledge, integrity, and beneficence, seem created to bless society by acting in spheres of great extent; while a more numerous class hold their existence in obscurity, or have a limited notoriety from their vices alone.

Nor, if you take into view those only who have received a public education, will the diversity be much less remarkable.—Among these you observe some of very high standing in society, and many who with less splendid powers, have acquired solid reputation, and are exerting a virtuous influence on those around them. You behold others who are the pest of society, a burden to themselves, and a disgrace to the seminaries from which they issued. There are some whom it would be your joy to resemble—there are others, an anticipated likeness to whom would cause your hearts to sink within you. Now it is to be considered, that this difference, and even contrast of character does by no means exclusively result from inequality of native powers.

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It arises from the cultivation which these powers receive, and the different uses to which they are applied. In other words, it proceeds from the abuse of time, or from a right employment of it.

But there is yet a more interesting view to be taken of this subject. All who once participated in earthly existence, do not at present, come within our observation. Yet their place in the universe is not vacated. They are still living agents, with great enlargement of powers, capacity, and knowledge. Open then the world of spirits. By the aid of religion, draw aside that broad curtain, so impervious to the light which nature has thrown over the future destiny of human beings. Behold them in full activity, reaping a harvest corresponding with the seed which was sown during their existence on earth. Contemplate the slothful servant cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Contemplate others, who having improved their talents, are now admitted into the joy of their Lord. On one side, everlasting life; on the other, shame and everlasting contempt.

All this too is the result of time. Characters so different were formed during a very limited probation.

> "Time is eternity;
> Pregnant with all eternity can give;
> Pregnant with all that makes archangels smile:
> Who murders time, he crusheth in the birth
> A power etherial, only not adored."—*Young*.

I now proceed to enumerate some of the ways in which time is frequently wasted by young gentlemen, who are professedly engaged in literary pursuits.

1. Your time will be partially lost, if your reading is not conducted agreeably to some plan or method. The accomplishment of any thing valuable, must be preceded by design. To effect any thing to good purpose, it is necessary to know previously what we mean to effect. The object aimed at must be well defined; and the path leading to it must be distinctly marked. The importance of what is here recommended will be

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rendered obvious by the following illustration. At rising in the morning, one person submits it to chance in what manner the day shall be spent. He reads the book that is casually thrown in his way, and continues the reading no longer than he is prompted by present inclination. Should another be presented, it is assumed with equal readiness, and abandoned with the same caprice. Another person has the subject of investigation before him, and the book by which he is determined to aid his inquiries. At the close of the day there will be an important difference in the value of their respective acquirements. In the latter case, the mind is fixed upon its object; in the former, it has no object. The one pursues the path previously marked out for himself; the other had no path to pursue.

That which is true of a day, may be true of a year, or of a longer period.

2. Much time is lost in reading with divided attention. The power of fixing the attention, i. e. of commanding the thoughts, has the most important connexion with mental improvement. Your acquisitions will be very nearly proportionate to the degree in which this power is possessed; and this power, let it be observed, is not born with us, but is the creature of habit. So far obtain the command of your minds, as easily to exclude all thoughts foreign to the subject which you wish to investigate, and your success in the investigation will exceed your hopes. But if while a book, however well chosen, engrosses the eye, the attention is shared by another object, or divided among many, little will be acquired; and what is still worse, the mind becomes unmanageable, and habits of inattention will be confirmed. Nor ought I to omit this opportunity of suggesting, that as memory depends much on attention, you will by this careless manner of reading, form a bad memory, or impair a good one. I speak of forming a memory, in a full belief that this is as truly within our own power, as to form an intellectual or moral character.

You have all been sensible, I presume, on some occasions, of the difficulty of confining your attention to a particular subject, and you have known too, the unhappy effects in which this dif-

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ficulty has resulted. We sometimes imagine that we have made great efforts in studying a subject, when in reality, the subject has scarcely been studied at all. The effort has been chiefly expended in unsuccessful endeavors to fix the mind. The general of an army could hardly be so far mistaken, as to suppose that he had been engaged in hard fighting, when he had been principally occupied in urging his troops, or in bringing back fugitives into the line. Whatever you read or study, let your mind be wholly engrossed by the subject.

3. A state of mind nearly allied to that which has just been noticed is indecision. You must not only ascertain what ought to be done, but must determine to do it. There is doubtless a time for deliberating; and on the right use of this it depends whether a man's life shall be distinguished for temerity, or good judgment. But the whole of life is not to be devoted to inquiry or indecision. Deliberation becomes important chiefly because it relates to action. The purpose of inquiry is to ascertain the fitness of an object, and the most direct and honorable way to attain it.

Let doubt and deliberation end, whenever it becomes fully apparent what ought to be done. No great effort of bodily strength is to be expected, when the sinews and fibres are relaxed. In this particular, there is a striking coincidence between the body and the mind. There must be a tone, a kind of elasticity produced in the intellectual powers; otherwise the greatest advantage will not be obtained, from your time and means of instruction. Nothing of very high value can be acquired without determination.

It is among the most permanent advantages of a collegiate education, that the general course of study is defined and established. In this respect there can be no uncertainty what ought to be done. The object is distinctly exhibited. Nothing is wanting but determination and perseverance. But while these are wanting, time will be partially lost, and the progress of mental cultivation will be slow and disheartening.

4. Another way of losing time is by spending it in idle conversation, and low pursuits. I need not inform you how criminal this is, when contemplated in a moral view. You know on

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whose authority it rests, that "by our words we shall be justified or condemned." I have at present, peculiar reference to your intellectual characters and progress. Conversation relating to your stated exercises, or on subjects of science and literature in general, is doubtless a very correct and advantageous way of spending your time. It well becomes young men of academical character, to cultivate literary intercourse. Your exercises will hereby become the more familiar, and the subjects to which they relate be more deeply impressed on the mind. In addition to this you will acquire a command of language, and ability to take part in literary discussions. On the contrary, by idle, impure, or profane conversation, and low pursuits, your intellectual natures will be degraded—you will contract aversion from manly and laudable employments—you will lose all relish for good society—and be prepared on leaving college, to form such associations as will lead you either to forget or to pervert to the worst purposes, whatever of knowledge may be here obtained.

To secure that attention which is so necessary to the student's success, the codes of all literary institutions have provided, that certain hours should be punctually devoted to study. Were this provision not accompanied with any allowance of time for relaxation, it would be evidently unreasonable. But where ample provision of this kind is made, all infringement on the law —all neglect of study-hours must be without excuse. A habit of leaving your rooms, or of freely admitting others into them, in hours of study, is with obvious propriety, noticed and condemned by the laws of this Seminary. The former is indeed a twofold offence; first, against order, for the maintenance of which the law has made a wise provision; and secondly against politeness, as a person thus guilty throws himself on those who are desirous of making a better use of their time, and may not possess the resolution, which indeed they ought to have, of saying to him plainly that his visits are unwelcome.

Amusements are justifiable, so far only, as they contribute to health, or prepare the mind for more vigorous and effectual application. By bodily exercise both these objects are accom-

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plished at the same time. Whatever kind of diversion either partakes of dissipation, or leads to it, should be the object of unqualified reprobation. All kinds of irregularity or excess, instead of contributing to health, impair it. The injurious effects are frequently so great as to be immediately perceptible; but if long delayed, still are they real and certain. No person can violate with final impunity, the order of nature, or laws of sobriety. Nor is the mind, by every species of dissipation less injuriously affected, than the body; and it is perversion of language to speak of recreating the mind, by that which deadens perception, disorders the judgment, and stupifies the powers of investigation.

Even in those bodily exercises, which, if used with moderation, are innocent and salutary, there may be danger of excess. Never let it escape you, that there is a broad line of distinction between amusement, and the duties of life. He who converts amusement into an employment, places his mind upon them, or uses them for their own sake, is guilty of an error not less absurd than that of the miser who, because wealth is known to procure the necessaries and luxuries of life, attributes it to an absolute inherent value, and makes it an object of passionate idolatry.

Among graduates, it is not uncommon to review the four years of college education, with a mixture of pleasure and self-reproach. The latter emotion arises from a consciousness of not having appreciated time, nor those facilities for the acquisition of literature and science, which accompany so long a residence at a public seminary. There are individuals no doubt who cannot reproach themselves severely on this account. But how large this number is you will be able to form a tolerably correct estimate, by taking a retrospect of that portion of college life, which is already past. I make this appeal, without meaning to have it in any measure implied, that inattention to study is either a prominent or general trait in the present character of this institution. There are many among you, I well know, whose sedulous application results not from the (ignoble) impulse of legal penalties, but from an inherent sense of proprie-

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ty and a thirst for knowledge. Still, is there a person present, who has lost no time in any of the ways, which have been enumerated? Is there one, whose intellectual improvement, might not, under the same circumstanses, have been somewhat greater, than it is at present? The fact is that we are all, as men, as human beings, inclined to inaction; and vis inertiae seems almost as truly a quality of mind, as it is of matter!

Permit me on this subject to add a few remarks by way of counsel.

1. Let that examination be made, which has been suggested. Consider whether there are not some portions of time, in each day, which might be employed to more valuable account; and calculate what would be the amount at the close of a whole year of all these fragments of time. May not a more rigid economy, as to this most precious article, be established, the good effects of which would be perceptible even in a few weeks? If it would be perceptible in a few weeks, how important might be the result at the close of that term of years, usually assigned to a college education? But if this economical use of time be maintained for four years, in the period of youth, it will become habitual, and will probably endure till the end of life. What may not be effected by it in the term of thirty or forty years?

With so great industry and perseverance you connect, it is probable, ideas of severe restraint and self denial. Be it so:

> "Nil sine magno,
> Vita labore dedit mortalibus."—*Hor. Sat. L.* 1. 9. 59.

But the self-denial is, I apprehend, exceedingly overrated. That which is habitual is performed without painful effort. Hence that excellent aphorism, "Pitch upon that course of life, which is most excellent, and habit will render it most agreeable."

Besides, things are agreeable or disagreeable, not merely as they are in themselves, but as they are viewed in relation to other objects. A thing, in itself indifferent or even in some measure offensive, becomes interesting and pleasant, if it is al-

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ways associated in the mind, with ideas of advantage, happiness, or honor. Opposite associations will, by obvious consequence, leave on the mind a different result. The indolence of the sluggard is embittered by images of disgrace and penury, whenever he anticipates the months of autumn and winter. Whereas the industrious cultivator of the soil, finds his labors in the spring, not only tolerable, but pleasant, while he connects them with the sight of flourishing fields and a rich harvest. With assiduous and persevering application you are to connect ideas of duty, usefulness, influence, and character. With sloth and a consequent want of knowledge, you are to associate ideas precisely the reverse of these. Nor is this a fanciful association. It is unquestionably founded in nature. It is morally right to cultivate our talents, whether greater or less: and it is morally wrong to neglect them. It is, likewise, an undeniable fact, that application brings knowledge, and that knowledge is connected with usefulness, power, and reputation.

I would by no means encourage you to form or cherish extravagant expectations. Still I would not only encourage, but urge you to aim at an elevated rank; to accomplish as much, as your powers, your health, and your advantages will permit;—to effect whatever may be accomplished by force of industry and application.

Consider, that there is no day, which does not bear some relation to another. Your assiduity to-day renders it more easy to avoid indolence to-morrow. By repeated efforts, agreeably to what has already been observed, habits are formed and established. In addition to this, whatever knowledge you acquire affords you the means of obtaining more. The truth of this remark will be readily perceived by every person, who is, in any measure acquainted with the elements of geometry. If the demonstrations of to-day are thoroughly understood and well established in the mind, those of to-morrow will be entered upon with confidence, and acquired with comparative facility. The remark is applicable not more to mathematics, than to history, metaphysics, or philosophy.

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As a further motive to a sedulous use of your time I would remark, that there has probably never been a period, since the first settlement of our country, when literature and a literary reputation were more highly appreciated, than they are at present.

As yet I have merely alluded to those obligations, to use time with economy, which are of more strength and solemnity than all others. We are bound to cultivate such economy, because we are the creatures of God; because we have duties to perform; and because as living agents, we are immortal. There is not only a connexion between youth and manhood; but also between our present characters and our future condition. There is not only a connexion between those moral and intellectual habits, which are formed at one period of life, and the influence, wealth, and reputation enjoyed at another; but there is a proportion still more exact between the whole amount of moral feeling and action exhibited on earth, and the eternal rewards of a judgment to come. We are emphatically chargeable with the guilt of wasting life, while our attention is not occupied with that immense object, in regard to which life is bestowed. The duration of our being is not suspended on our choice. To annihilate ourselves is no more within our power, than it was to create ourselves. Existence may be wasted, but it cannot be extinguished. We may be regardless of time, but so is not our Creator. Our traits of character for every day, are fairly delineated by the divine hand. The colors will never fade. The marks will be distinctly legible at that period, when the "judgment shall set, and the books shall be opened, and the dead shall be judged out of the things written in the books." On these immortal pages, some new lines are impressed every day. "Nulla dies sine linea." Some new development of character is recorded for the inspection of angels and men—something which shall add gems to the crown of glory, or weight to the chains of darkness!

I close in the words of Dr. Young:

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"Thou think'st it folly to be wise too soon.
Youth is not rich in time; it may be poor;
Part with it as with money, sparingly, Pay
No moment, but in purchase of its worth;
And what its worth, ask death-beds, they can tell.
Part with it as with life, reluctant, big
With holy hope of nobler time to come—
Time higher armed, still nearer the great mark
Of men and angels—virtue more divine."

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ADDRESSES.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Gentlemen, Trustees and Overseers; and Gentlemen, Professors and Tutors:

Succeeding, in a highly responsible office, to a man unusually qualified for it by natural and acquired talents, and by the full possession of public confidence, it is impossible to conceal the anxiety with which I address you—an anxiety the more oppressive, as it operates on a system constitutionally feeble, and now scarcely recovered from wasting disease.

Speaking under these disadvantages, I solicit your favorable attention.

The interest you have taken in the establishment and superintendence of this seminary demonstrates your conviction of the utility of public literary institutions. Any observations in proof of this point would be therefore superfluous.

It is well known to be an infelicity attending all human establishments that they are liable to perversion. That which is designed as a powerful instrument of good, may contribute to extensive ruin. The evil resulting from the abuse of power, is generally commensurate with the good which would be effected by a right use of it. Colleges afford no exception to these general remarks. Such has evidently been the judgment of all by whom they have been established or cherished.

Were indolence, for example, tolerated among youth who resort to public seminaries, the most inactive of our species would be allured thither; and if any of a different character should by chance, or the imprudence of their guardians, mingle with them, they would soon become assimilated to the general

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mass. Were no care exercised by the government of colleges, to preserve, or correct the morals of literary youth, there would be few conditions perhaps, in which the growth of moral depravity would be more rapid or more luxuriant. He whose vices are moderate in solitude, would become intolerable if connected with numbers, whose dispositions to offend were as great, and whose habits of offending were more inveterate than his own. Besides, learning gives power to its possessor; those persons, therefore, who become learned at the expense of moral principles and moral habits, acquire at once the ability and disposition to injure society.

To secure the benefits of literary establishments to the exclusion of their disadvantages, government has been instituted. It has not been thought sufficient, that the means of knowledge should be afforded, but that a disposition should likewise be cultivated to apply this knowledge to a right use. Without this colleges could not exist; or if they could, they ought not, as they would only be the instruments of arming the wicked to distress the good.

In this view of the subject, we clearly perceive the high value of good government; and we see that the object of such government always is, and always must be, to promote the literary and moral character of those who acknowledge it.

Laws, whether those of a college or of a civil community, should be few in number, easily understood, reasonable in themselves, and punctually executed. Laws which are not worth executing were never worth enacting; and when they exist, should be erased from the code to which they belong. If it be a known case, that some are violated with impunity, it is neither difficult nor unreasonable to presume the same of others; hence the authority of the whole becomes enfeebled; and for the same reason that laws should be repealed, rather than suffered to become obsolete, those which are designed for execution, should be executed with uniform punctuality. On entering college, a student does in fact, form a contract with the governors of the institution. They promise to instruct and guard him with parental

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care; he, on his part, stipulates obedience to the laws, docility, application, and correct habits. When "every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward," there is no cause of complaint—nothing takes place but what, at the time of entering into the agreement, it was understood should take place. The offender receives the punishment specified by those regulations to which he consented, and under which he placed himself. When determined to commit a crime, he does it in the distinct view of its consequences. Not so, should facts render it uncertain whether strict obedience will be uniformly required. In this case, there would be a language in the administration indefinite, to be sure, but certainly different from that of the written code; and he who was disposed to transgress would consider it problematical, whether, in case of detection, he should suffer, or be acquitted—whether he should be judged by the law, or by some unknown modification of it. It appears then, not only that the steady enforcement of established laws is necessary to preserve subordination, and secure authority from contempt, but that it is likewise most fair and honorable as it respects the party stipulating obedience.

That the morals of students ought to be a matter of primary attention does not admit of a moment's debate. If we be the subjects of moral government, and responsible to that Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save or destroy, literary acquirements, however spleadid, but poorly compensate for increasing degeneracy of heart; and the case is still worse, if in proportion as the life becomes profligate, there be a contemptuous neglect of literary pursuits. No one can reflect, without mortification and extreme regret, that any serious parent should ever withhold from his sons the benefits of a public education, from a well grounded fear that their minds would be corrupted. This reflection is the more distressing, if we consider that the churches of our land are expecting, and have a right to expect from colleges their future supply.

Figure to yourselves a youth of promising, perhaps of brilliant talents, of engaging deportment, and strict morality, leaving

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his father's house for a four years' residence at some seat of learning. Who can wonder at those high hopes, which are mingled with parental prayers and benedictions? Who can wonder that a father's, or a mother's fondness sometimes anticipates the future usefulness and elevation of their son? Suppose this amiable lad unhappily becomes acquainted with individuals of dissipated life. By intimacy, and perhaps by flattery on their part, he contracts a fondness for their society and their vices. Adopting himself, what he is pleased with in them, he attends on college exercises without constancy or pleasure, and after having been the instrument of diffusing among others the same corruption which he has received, returns to his anxious parents, intemperate, profane, debauched, and a despiser of God!

I well know it is not within human power to change the heart. Instructors can, by no efforts, communicate to their pupils a conformity to the divine image. But surely there are restraints which may be imposed—there are means which may be used, and which are commonly in a greater or smaller degree, accompanied with success; and I tremble under the solemn conviction, of the high accountability of that office on which I am entering —a conviction, that the usefulness of the students in time, and their character through eternity, may be affected, greatly affected, by the manner in which the executive officers of college discharge their duty.

To remark that there is an important connexion between good government and good morals, would be asserting what no one disbelieves. He therefore, who is hostile to wholesome restraint, in literary or civil communities, commences a warfare with moral obligation. Now if such be the importance of government, surely they who oppose it are worthy of dishonor. But, in order to their being distinguished with merited dishonor, they must be known; and in order to this, they who are acquainted with their offences must, when called on to give testimony, come forward with honorable frankness—with unshrinking integrity. There is nothing more inconsistent, not only with the gospel of Christ, but with a just sense of honor, with

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the hardihood and spirit of a man, than to interpose between the law and the culprit, a wilful violation of truth. Because my neighbor is so unhappily deserted of God, as to raise a seditious hand against the laws of the State, and would thereby bring ruin on myself, in common with every citizen, am I so strongly bound to him, that I should sell my conscience and hazard my soul to secure him from punishment? Must I sacrifice common honesty—must I meanly evade inquiries, because forsooth, himself and accomplices will be offended at my plain declaration of truth?

It would be immaterial whether no laws existed, or whether all crimes were sure to be concealed. In either case, the transgressor would be exempted from fear, and from all restraint. Fear and restraint will, therefore, be diminished in proportion to the probability of concealment, and this probability will depend on the disposition which generally prevails, either to take side with the law, or with those who rise to oppose it.

It is a circumstance extremely inauspicious, when students conceive the idea, that their interest and that of their instructors can be different and hostile—or that any infraction of college laws is so much clear gain acquired to themselves. The fact is, that whatever tends to the honor and advantage of the one, tends equally to the honor and advantage of the other. It is for the honor of government that the student should acquire knowledge, and be adorned with every moral and amiable accomplishment. Can the reputation, the utility, the best interest of the latter be promoted in a different manner? Sedition is not the interest of the student, nor is oppression the interest of government.

Gentlemen, shall I take the liberty of introducing a few remarks relating to the studies pursued in this college? It is justly considered as part of a liberal education to obtain some knowledge of antiquity, heathen mythology, and heathen ethics. That volume, which we denominate "Sacred Scripture" affords us information, not only as to a period, concerning which we obtain light from no other source; but leads us back to the creation

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itself, showing the time when this event took place, its progress, and the circumstances by which it was attended. Besides the ancient mythology of heathen nations, it speaks of a different system of divinity, commencing with creation, and descending down through the space of four thousand years. It describes an extraordinary people—an extraordinary system of polity and morals. In addition to this it gives us a very minute narration of a personage claiming to be the Son of God; whose life and doctrines were confessedly different from those of any other person on earth. Now, should we entirely leave out the matter of inspiration and divine authority, it would still be true, that there is not a volume on earth whose claims on the attention of literary men are so strongly supported. But when we consider the Scriptures as given by inspiration of God; unfolding a system of grace to a world under condemnation; presenting to our apostate species the only conditions of eternal safety; a knowledge of these writings has a value which language cannot describe.

I would respectfully suggest, whether some very general system containing the outlines of Christian theology, might not with advantage be considered as a necessary part of collegiate studies; and whether his education should not be considered as deficient, who has no particular knowledge of the facts and doctrines described in the sacred volume.

Young Gentlemen, Students of this College—

By resorting to this place, you publicly declare that literature is your immediate object. In giving you an opportunity to be liberally educated, God has bestowed on you a privilege of high value. You are the objects of public attention, you are the objects of parental anxiety. It is in your power to do much honor to this rising institution—it is in your power to disgrace it. It is in your power to pierce with grief your affectionate parents, or to cause their hearts to sing for joy. Between these alternatives you cannot hesitate.

Many students have most unhappily received the idea, that

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great genius and close application should never unite; and that dissipation and indolence are strong marks of superior intellect. This opinion is the legitimate offspring of depravity and dulness. If a youth possesses genius, should it be cultivated or neglected? Should he be learned or ignorant? If learned, in what way is his literature to be acquired? Will it come to him without his seeking? Does idleness give to the mind a certain susceptibility of knowledge? Will an acquaintance with antiquity—with the works of taste—with the language and government of former ages descend and rest upon him, while his mind is vacant of thought, or deeply engaged in profligacy and dissipation? If he acquire knowledge with ease, he is doubly criminal for neglecting the pursuit. If he do well with little study, what brilliant success would crown intense application!

It may not, indeed, be difficult for a person whose fondness for an irregular life is combined with vanity, to mistake his loose habits for marks of intellectual merit. But his acquaintance will be more incredulous—they will deny his pretensions, till he bring forward some stronger proof—they will demand that his high talents, if such he possess, be cultivated, and applied to some useful purpose.

But though many motives may with propriety be exhibited in favor of studious diligence and correct morals, nothing can ensure these but the commanding voice of religion. That not only shows the creature's obligation to devote his talents to the Being from whom he received them, but it awes the mind, restrains a wandering imagination, and concentrates the intellectual powers—thus preparing the soul for the most successful application to any subject.

I entreat that you would, by no means, imbibe the opinion, that persons of different ages and variously stationed in life are to be regulated by different systems of morality. Our obligations to the Supreme Being commence with our moral agency, and continue forever. The divine law is not repealed, nor is it suspended during the season of youth. There are no persons on earth more certainly bound to love their Creator, and to live

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godly in Christ Jesus, than you to whom I am now affectionately speaking. To live without God is not the privilege of youth; it is the prilviege, (if such it can be termed) of those, and of those only, on whom the gifts of reason and conscience were never conferred.

Whether we shall exist accountable beings or not, is a matter which our Creator does not submit to our option. It is not left for us to decide whether we will receive our destiny among the rational, or irrational part of the works of God. We cannot annihilate our accountability, nor get free from it a single hour. We must exist, whether we will or not, and take the eternal consequences of those characters which we now form.

In your pursuit of learning, as well as in your ordinary behavior, consider the relation which every action has to your character and happiness in the present state, and to your honor or dishonor in the world to come. It is undeniably the part of wisdom, not mainly to consult the present hour, but to take all consequences, all future scenes into view, and whatever youthful ardor may dictate, the time advances when there will be, on the subject of human conduct and human feelings, but one opinion. The high and the low, the learned and the ignorant, the illustrious and obscure, the sober and the gay, will be alike convinced, that "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that is understanding."

I cannot persuade myself to close this address, without adverting to an idea already suggested, that the government of this college have no interest different from yours; and that you, of course, cannot possibly have an interest hostile to theirs. They will require nothing of you, which, under the like circumstances, they would not require of those whom they love most tenderly; —even of those, towards whom they feel a parent's fondness. They would not, without necessity, give you a single mortification, nor a moment's pain. They wish to see you virtuous, happy, and honorable. If, at any time, they should be under the distressing necessity of punishing, which necessity, may divine grace prevent, they will not act from a vindictive spirit, but

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from a sense of duty to the public, and to that Being, to whom they, as well as you, must give an account.

Finally; may the government and the students of this seminary alike feel their dependence on the Almighty.

"Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, eternal Word;
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honor, hope, or peace;
From thee is all, that soothes the life of man:
His high endeavor, and his glad success;
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O! thou bounteous Giver of all good!
Thou art, of all thy gifts, thyself the crown;
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee, rich, take what thou wilt away."

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ADDRESS,*

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1808.

Young Gentlemen,

On such an occasion as this, I do not ask your attention; for I know you will grant it. Permit me to hope, that your remembrance of what is said, and your practical regard to it, will be equal to the readiness, with which it is now heard.

If your object in resorting to this place were not merely to obtain academical honors, but to acquire that which merits them, it can scarcely be necessary to set before you the importance of continued application. Your short excursion into the fields of science, has not brought you within the sight of boundaries; but only, as I would hope, to a humble conviction, that the

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* As much interest was felt by the alumni and friends of the College in the former publication of these addresses, the correspondence in relation to the subject, which, on the part of the graduates, expressed the public sentiment of the time, is here subjoined.

To the Rev. Dr. Appleton, President of Bowdoin College.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

At a meeting of the graduates of Bowdoin College, assembled at Brunswick on the evening of the last commencement, the undersigned were appointed a committee respectfully to solicit of you for the purpose of publication, copies of the Addresses delivered by you to the successive classes of graduates during the period of your presidency.

In making this application in pursuance of their appointment, they presume not to express any other sentiment in regard to the character of those valuable and instructive performances, than is signified by the strong desire generally prevailing among the friends of the

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space already passed over, is extremely small, compared with that which remains to be traversed. That branch of a learned education, which I would particularly advise you to review and cultivate, is the Latin and Greek languages. Against the study of these, there was some years since, a very preposterous but powerful opposition. Impatient of application, and every species of restraint, many flattered themselves, that their superior powers of intellect had suggested to them the possibility of being learned without study. Ancient languages, as well as habits, and modes of thinking, were viewed with a kind of barbarian contempt.

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institution for such a disposition of them as may tend to place them more extensively in the possession of the public, and be best adapted to accomplish the interesting and important objects contemplated in them. At the same time in discharging this very grateful duty on their part, the individuals of the committee beg leave to repeat the assurance of the continued respect and affectionate regard, with which they remain,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your most obedient servants,

CHARLES S. DAVIES.
BENJAMIN RANDALL
JAMES BOWDOIN
CHARLES DUMMER
STEPHEN EMERY
ENOS MERRILL.

January 5, 1819.

ANSWER.

Messrs. Charles S. Davies, Enos Merrill, Benjamin Randall, James Bowdoin, Charles Dummer, Stephen Emery.

GENTLEMEN,

When I received your communication, having the usual prospect of human life, I concluded to answer in the negative.—My prospects being now entirely changed, I think it my duty to submit the Addresses to your wishes; praying God that he would make them in some measure, useful—instrumental at least, of reminding you of those affectionate feelings, with which they were delivered.

I am, Gentlemen, most faithfully

Your friend,

J. APPLETON.

October 29, 1819.

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An auspicious change has been produced on this subject. A knowledge of the dead languages is now cultivated with increasing assiduity. There is scarcely a college in New England, where terms of admission have not been raised, and where greater progress than formerly, is not considered an essential part of a public education. The great regard, which is paid to the dead languages in general at the universities in Europe, is evinced by the effects which it has produced in recovering and collecting ancient copies and manuscripts.

It is a most obvious inconsistency, to be indifferent to the retaining of that, which could be acquired only by the labor of several years. Whatever knowledge you possess on this subject, or any other, will, without constant attention, gradually decay. Be persuaded to continue and augment your acquaintance with the languages of Greece and Rome, by devoting a reasonable portion of your time to their poets, orators, and historians.

Coming forward as you do, at a crisis, the most eventful, you cannot be indifferent to the destinies of your country. It is not my business to excite your passions and prejudices, nor enlist you into either of those political parties, which have so unhappily divided our country. But there is a party, with which I would by all means, desire to have you connected. I mean the party of those under whatever political denomination they are ranked, who sincerely and ardently love their country; the genuine descendants of the first settlers of New England; of men, who had an invincible courage, founded on religious principles; a determined spirit, which nothing could break or subdue; men, of whom it may be said, without figure, that "they loved liberty more than they feared death."

While you boast of being the offspring of those noble spirits, distinguished alike for their love of good order, of religion, and freedom, regard those with peculiar respect and affection, who display the same character.

Whatever object you have in view, whether of a public or private nature, be sure that your measures be fair and honora-

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ble. Noble ends are to be pursued by noble means. Among the evils attendant on political divisions, it is not the least, that by inflaming the passions, they diminish a regard to truth and moral obligation.

Perhaps there has never been a day when you were in greater danger than at present, of forming too flattering expectations of future life. New objects now present themselves; new prospects open upon you. Be not deceived. You belong to a species of beings, "whose foundation is in the dust, and who are crushed before the moth."

From the most perishable objects on earth, the divine oracles borrow their figures to delineate human frailty. What is man? A tale that is told—a shadow that flies—grass that withers—a flower that falls—vapor that vanishes. This very occasion brings to your remembrance an illustration of these remarks. In the removal of him,* under whose successful tuition you first became members of this seminary, you perceive that neither suavity of temper, solid and well cultivated talents, nor humble, unaffected piety, can secure life to its possessor.

The evidences of Christianity have constituted part of your classical study. You know the ground which supports that noble edifice. Winds may rush against it—storms may beat upon it—surges may dash around it; it is all in vain: The foundation of God standeth sure. Permit me to use this last opportunity of urging your attention to the discoveries, precepts, and doctrines of the gospel, the internal frame and texture of that faith, which was once delivered to the saints. It is not easy to conceive a greater absurdity, than to bestow much labor and learned investigation on the evidences of Christianity, while there is a perfect indifference to the doctrines, precepts, and discoveries, of which this religion consists. If the gospel be not worth studying, loving, and practising, it is not worth defending.

I entreat you to study Christianity, as that by which God will regulate the retributions of eternity. It is not a religion,

* Rev. Dr. M'Kean, late President of this College.

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which flatters human nature in the least; nor can any religion do this, which has God for its author, or truth for its foundation. But while it represents the species to which you belong, as in a state of moral ruin, it not only shows the possibility of recovery through a Redeemer; but presents to your view many instances of its own efficacy to change the heart and the life. Let it be your first and grand object to possess the Christian temper, to feel the power of evangelical principles. Let the lives which you live in the flesh, be influenced and cultivated by your faith in the Son of God. If you embrace genuine Christianity, whatever profession you pursue, it will make you more happy, more useful, more consistent, and uniform. It places before you the noblest objects, it requires you to act from the most elevated motives; it promises to the obedient, thrones and kingdoms which can never be removed.

Next to the great concern of securing peace with God, I would recommend it to you, to have some profession, at least some object, some pursuit distinctly in view. This will give stability, and tend to concentrate your intellectual efforts. While you pursue, with unremitting resolution, some important object, and rigidly adhere to whatever you believe to be the will of your Maker, cultivate suavity of temper, urbanity of manners, and, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. There is not an individual belonging to our species, whose convenience and feelings are to be wholly disregarded.

Finally, let me remind you of the great number of those who will, with lively interest, witness your deportment. The patrons of this institution deplore the irregularity, and rejoice in the virtues, of all who pertain to it. The immediate government unite with yours, their own happiness and honor. Your parents feel an anxiety, which can neither be expressed by them, nor repaid by you. Individual benefactors, and a generous legislature, will examine the fruit of a tree planted by their care, nourished and refreshed by their repeated acts of liberality.

But there is a Witness, whose attention you cannot for a

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moment avoid. His approbation or censure will be expressed to you, not only before the individuals, who compose this assembly, but before the assembled universe. For "I saw," said the exile of Patmos, "I saw the dead, both small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and the dead judged out of the things written in the books."

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1809.

Young Gentlemen,

In your character of members of this seminary, I now address you for the last time; nor, considering the frailty and casualties of human life, is it unreasonable to reflect, that even your small number may never return to this place. If it should, I am not unmindful of another event, which may render communications from me equally impossible.

To possess intellectual natures is your privilege, and perhaps your pride. But there is no privilege which does not imply corresponding obligation. Your rational powers have already been a source both of pleasure and of pain. You have had enjoyments and sufferings, the very existence of which implied intelligence. This rational nature, whether it continue ten years, or ten thousand, will be uniform in rendering its possessor susceptible of happiness or misery.

Man sees a difference in moral actions. He sees that a certain course ought to be pursued, and that deviation from such a course ought to be condemned. It is impossible that perception of right, should not produce uneasiness in him who is conscious of being wrong. Nor is it less impossible, that self-approbation and joy should not arise in the heart, when duty and moral character are perceived to be coincident.

If the difference between right and wrong be clearly discerned by intelligent creatures; much more is it discerned by Him

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who is the source of intelligence. Nor can it be conceived, that while this difference is clearly in the view of our Creator, there should not be a corresponding difference in the treatment, received from him by his rational offspring. Nothing but the want of power, can prevent a being of moral rectitude from manifesting his affection for virtue, and his opposition to vice. A man of real virtue has assurance, therefore, that his Maker views him with complacency; the transgressor must on the same ground, adopt, in regard to himself, a contrary conclusion. Nor can either rationally doubt, that the divine estimation of both will, in some part of their existence, be made public; it being absurd to suppose that He, who is independent, and of power unlimited, should suffer himself to be considered neuter in the grand controversy between virtue and vice. You perceive then, not only that the doctrine of a retribution is consonant with reason, but that reason is irreconcilably hostile to the opposite belief.

We are not more concerned to know that there will be a retribution, than to ascertain what in human actions will be the subject of commendation or censure. Rational doubt on this subject cannot long be entertained. Besides the intentions, or what Christianity denominates the heart, there can be nothing in human actions, but either modulations of voice, or bodily motions. Is it in any measure questionable, whether virtue can be predicated of the two last? Can virtue be directly concerned whether your limbs move in a straight, or a curve line? Or whether your lungs and organs of speech, be adapted to the producing of one sound, rather than another? If not, morality must consist, agreeably to the Christian doctrine, in purity of heart. Our obligations to the maintenance of this, are neither occasional nor intermitting. They are constant, and eternal. Whatever appearance of rigor there may be in the doctrine, that moral obligation extends to every moment of rational life, it is impossible that any consistent scheme of ethics should be formed, in which this doctrine is not either asserted or implied. If intelligent creatures be obligated to obey the rule of moral rec-

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titude at one moment, they cannot be at liberty to deviate from it at any other.

These fundamental principles of natural religion, are, by Christianity, confirmed, and placed in a light the most clear and impressive. You are therein taught, not only that the divine estimation of moral actions will hereafter be known, but that a day for revealing the righteous judgments of God is now fixed in the eternal counsels of heaven, when the Most High shall associate with Him, all who are upright in heart, and declare his immutable hatred to the cause and the patrons of vice. Interested as you will be in the decisions of the final judgment, suffer not yourselves to be deceived as to the terms on which your Maker's approbation is to be obtained. Be not content with those ill defined, those shapeless images of virtue, presented to your view, in the language of an immoral, unthinking age. That virtue, which unites her votaries to the divine nature, must imply a resemblance to the divine moral character. You are going forth into the world, at an age in which vice is treated with indulgence and courtesy; and of course, a very moderate portion of regularity in deportment, will pass for superior virtue. It would, therefore, you perceive, be extremely dangerous to reckon yourselves among the friends of real virtue, because you may not fall short of the common standard, or even should you far exceed it. He, whose object on earth was to bear witness to the truth; He, by whom the eternal destinies of mankind will be decided, has taught us, that the world in general is unfriendly to that moral purity, which he will recognise and reward. Nor can I permit the present opportunity to pass, without reiterating what you have frequently heard, that no dispositions nor actions will appear with honor, in the final result, but those which proceed from inward affections to the Supreme Being: No plants, but those which our heavenly Father has planted, will be transferred to the paradise of God.

Should you be disgusted with the doctrines of Christianity, or terrified at the strictness of its moral requirements; be assured, that nothing can be gained by an attempt to disbelieve it.

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If you cultivate habits of thinking, evidences of religion, both natural and revealed, will thicken around you. Should you reject the latter, no advantage would be acquired, even on the score of present comfort. Natural religion has all the severity of revealed, with none of its mercy. Even atheism itself, were it true, would give no security against future sufferings; since the cause, whatever it be, by which we now exist, may continue our existence without limits.

Deliberate discussions of moral subjects, and inquiries concerning them, are much to be encouraged. Truth has nothing to fear from intense scrutiny. But I would advise you never to raise trifling objections, however plausible, against what you believe to be true, lest they should eventually appear to have weight from the circumstance of their being your own. If deceived by others, your loss may be great; but if deceived by yourselves, the loss will be equal, and the guilt greater.

Having made these remarks on the great subject of religion, I would subjoin others, relating to the external course of your future lives.

Our Creator has been pleased to ordain, that nothing valuable should be acquired without effort. Though exhortations to industry are perpetually reiterated, and its importance displayed, it is by no means easy to be convinced of the real extent of its power. Those philosophers, civilians, or professional men, whose fame or writings have long survived them, have not been indebted for their elevation, exclusively to the bounties of nature. Their ardor, industry, and invincible resolution, had no inconsiderable effect in forming their characters. Though the observations of Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir William Jones, as to the mediocrity of their own original abilities, are to be considered rather the result of their modesty, than as conveying literal truth; it cannot be doubted that their surprising industry would have procured very honorable distinction, even to persons of common intellectual powers. By application an incredible difference may be produced between persons, whose natural endowments are not dissimilar. But habits of industry, if they

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ever exist, must be formed at an early age. Let me entreat you to get and preserve a command over your own minds; the power of directing them to whatever object requires your attention.

I take it for granted, that you are not indifferent to human estimation; and I hope that you will never affect such indifference. But whose approbation do you covet?

> "—Nam satis est equitem mihi plaudere: ut audax,
> Contemptis aliis, explosa Arbuscula dixit."

You would not be anxious for praise from the stupid and undiscerning; and pray, would their approbation be an object, more to be regarded, whose intellectual powers are so biassed by moral depravity, as to put evil for good and good for evil? But if you value the esteem of wise and good men, you will desire, still more eagerly, the approbation of upright beings superior to man; and most of all must you covet the approbation of Him, whose judgment will eternally accord with truth.

Never suffer a desire of praise to engage you in that, which will end in shame and everlasting contempt.

Though the opinion of others is entitled to attention, you cannot be justified in adopting it merely on their authority. As intelligent agents, you are accountable for the use, which you make of your intellectual powers. But a person of an independent mind is not under the necessity of being supercilious and dogmatical. Young men, on their leaving college, have frequently been charged, (perhaps not always unjustly) with giving their opinions with too much confidence, and impatiently bearing contradiction. May it be your care never to deserve this reproach. A modest deportment is not more becoming, than it is advantageous. He, who makes a humble estimate of his own talents or virtues, usually finds others ready to do ample justice to both. As their own sensibility and pride, are not wounded by his high pretensions, they will have no pleasure in his mortification.

As the habit of expressing opinions dogmatically is disgusting; that of doing it frequently is imprudent. Opinions, formed

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hastily, will often by consequence be incorrect; and, in proportion to the frequency of a man's judging incorrectly, will his opinion be disregarded, when a decision is required.

Be conscientiously upright in your statement of facts; especially when character is concerned. Do not scatter firebrands, arrows, and death, and say that you are only in sport. Human depravity is scarcely in any thing more clearly shown, than in the pleasure, which, in spite of all efforts to conceal it, is often manifested in reporting the vices or indiscretions of others. An impression, made by a single sentence, may be communicated to many, producing permanent injury to individual characters; an injury, which perhaps the author of the expression did not contemplate, and may be wholly unable to remedy. It was the resolution of a man, as eminent for talents, as for piety, never to disclose the vices of men, unless some object of real importance required it. On such occasions, it becomes a duty; and to withhold a plain, upright statement of facts, when order, virtue, or the public good requires, argues a disposition criminally servile and timid.

Though it is as well your interest, as your duty, to treat all persons with civility and decorum, I would by no means advise you to be intimate with a great number of persons; nor with any on slight acquaintance. If any should offer you their confidence on easy terms, be assured, it is not worth having. You cannot think highly of his discretion, who is willing to put himself in your power when but superficially known to him.

That your reputation and safety depend much on the associations, which you form, cannot be doubted. Open profligates are not the only persons, whose intimacy may be injurious. There are thousands, not belonging to this description, whose system of morals, if they may be said to have any, less resembles Christian morality, than the practical standard of pagan ethics. Unite yourselves to those at present, whose future destiny you would choose to participate. "He, that walketh with wise men, shall be wise."

Young Gentlemen,—To a deportment, fair and honorable,

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and to a life of Christian piety, I exhort you by your love of good reputation and hatred of shame; by your affection and gratitude to those, who gave you birth; by your sense of the public generosity, and your regard to the approbation of those illustrious characters,* whose attendance evinces the interest, which they take in this literary establishment, and by whom is not forgotten, either the prosperity of the commonwealth, or of science or Christianity:—Finally, I exhort you by the solemnity of that hour, when as little of mortal existence shall remain, as now remains of your academical life; and by the still greater solemnity of the day, when "the Son of God shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

* On this occasion, his Excellency Governor Gore, his Honor Lieut. Governor Cobb, and other gentlemen of distinction were present.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1810.

Young Gentlemen,

The very few moments of your college life, which now remain, and which will soon be as irrecoverable, as "the years beyond the flood," I would eagerly seize with design to produce or perpetuate moral impressions.

I do most sincerely felicitate you on the arrival of this day. I partake largely in those sensations of tenderness and joy unutterable, which are at this moment experienced by your parents and connexions. They now obtain a joyful release from the anxiety, which, since your removal from them, has been almost their daily companion. They have witnessed the first fruits of your intellectual efforts, and now look forward to the time, when you may appear on a more public stage, perform duties of more interest to society, and exhibit characters of more firm and deep wrought texture.

At all periods of life, we are liable to be deceived by the sound of words. There are circumstances and seasons, however, when this deception may be practised upon us with peculiar facility. To young gentlemen of ingenuous feelings, nothing is recommended perhaps, which they hear with more pleasure, than independence of character.

Though this term, in its legitimate use, comprehends qualities of high value, it is not unfrequently made to designate those, by which reason and morality are set equally at defiance.

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Beyond all question, no person is independent of the Divine Being. If any think otherwise, why do they not give some proof of that power and elevation, of which they are so ready to boast? Why do they not secure to themselves perpetual life, and youth, and vigor? Why do they tolerate a lowering atmosphere, when their convenience requires serene weather? Why is the sun permitted to delay its rising, when its light is necessary to their business or pleasure? Why, indeed, should independent beings ever be disappointed? If they control events, why do the latter counteract their desires?

Among all the absurdities of heathen mythology, a constant sense of dependence on divine agency is remarkable. If a child was born, the gods marked his destiny. If battles were fought, the gods held the balance, and gave preponderancy to which scale they pleased. If a dart was thrown, it fell harmless unless divinely directed. Among the leaders of a numerous, combined army, it was noticed, if there was one who acknowledged no dependence on celestial powers—or boasted, Dextra mihi Deus, et telum, quod missile libro. The best of the spoils, taken in war, were devoted by the Greeks in sacrifice to the gods. Their augury, oracles, supplications, and religious processions, unite to prove that the sentiment expressed by Pliny in his panegyric on Trajan, was common among the Greeks and Romans: Nihil rite, nihilque providenter homines, sine Deorum immortalium ope, consilio, honore, auspicarentur.

If you are not now, it is certain that you never can be independent of your Creator. Objects, events, and the universe itself, will never be less under the divine direction, than they are at present. Whether you shall advance in your studies, acquire fair reputations, or extensive influence; whether you shall enjoy a high state of health or long life, will depend subordinately on your activity and prudence; but ultimately on the same Power which gave you being.

Nor is this remark to be applied exclusively to the present life. A hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years hence, you

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will be as dependent, as at the present moment; and perhaps much more obviously so. Nay further; to whatever part of the empire of God you may be urged, your dependence will never diminish. The treatment which you shall receive from your Creator will depend on the agreement or disagreement, which there is between your character and his commands. Whenever persons pretend to independence as it relates to Deity, they deceive no one. It is always taken for what it really is, a most nauseous compound of impiety and affectation. The independence of him who sets the divine law at defiance, is that of a man who, to show his spirit, should fire his own house, leap from a precipice, or swallow a deadly potion. By any of these outrages, the power of Deity would not be diminished; and surely his own would not be enlarged. He still exists; and precisely in that place, and under those circumstances, which an offended Deity sees fit to assign.

Acquainted, as you are, with the general evidence of natural and revealed religion, you can hardly be thought in danger of openly disavowing your obligations to the Most High. But even in relation to your fellow creatures, you will permit me to observe, dependence is probably much greater than you imagine. The change which is now to take place in your mode of life is, doubtless, very considerable; but does by no means imply a transition from dependence to independence. Your relations in a variety of respects, will henceforward be different. They will be so in regard to your instructors; perhaps too, your dependence on parental support will be less absolute, than heretofore. But duties and restraints, though varied, will be neither less numerous, nor less important. A state of society is necessarily a state of dependence; and if the obligations hence resulting, are contemned, society understands perfectly well, how to bring delinquents to a better mind. I am not speaking exclusively of those restraints which are imposed by deliberative assemblies, or which ever assume the formality of laws; but of the numerous regulations, more easily understood than defined, which are known to be of real consequence in the intercourse of

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social life. As the common interest and feeling require that these be observed, habitual inattention to them never passes with impunity. Should the interest of others be to you a matter of indifference, it will soon be rendered evident, that yours is so to them. Should you by a supercilious deportment show contempt for their esteem, they will not long want opportunities of convincing you of the evils resulting from it.

Society has agreed upon certain modes of civility, agreeably to which social intercourse shall be maintained. Even these, so far as they comport with strict morality, are not to be violated. Nothing is more deservedly an object of ridicule, than the affectation of him, who would, on the neglect of these, establish a claim to superior intellect.

The many restrictions of which I am speaking, whether they relate to moral behavior or not, have, to all intents and purposes, the nature of laws; penalties are affixed to their violation, and are usually exacted with rigorous punctuality.

If a young man be inattentive to study, or business, lives without method and without an object, the penalty which he incurs, consists in not making acquisitions, valuable to himself, and in not obtaining the confidence of others. If he be dissipated, he will suffer punishment, in the loss, not only of property and health, but of the estimation of those whose patronage is necessary to his elevation in life. If he be thoughtless, or given to exaggerations in speech; or if he exhibit temerity in judgment or action, he will experience punishment, in the superior credit, which is allowed to the opinions and representations of those who speak and act with greater caution. It is vain to set at defiance those with whom you are every day conversant—and whose opinion or feelings will be the ground of that treatment, which you receive from them. Nor do these remarks apply exclusively to the early part of life. Even if your future success correspond with our highest wishes, you will still find, that though many are dependent on you, you are likewise dependent on many. This would be true under any form.

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of government on earth; under that popular establishment which we enjoy, it is emphatically so.

What then, you may ask, is really independence of character? I answer, it consists in an habitual determination of the mind to regard objects according to their value; in making the best use of our own mental endowments for the discovery of truth and duty, and in a resolute conformity to these, when made known. While it rejects a servile imitation of others; it does by no means require a contempt for their sentiments or example. Nothing can be more inconsistent with an independent spirit, than to profess conviction, where you do not feel it; or to say, that you now perceive the falseness of former opinions, when you are only convinced, that present interest requires you to renounce them. To act agreeably to the dictates of reason and conscience, though present advantage or the popular sentiment be on the other side, is to maintain the high character of a rational being; to act under the impulse of appetite, in contempt of reason and future interest, undeniably implies the most degrading servitude.

In connexion with these remarks, I cannot forbear to suggest, that the term independent is never more abused, than when applied to the duellist. To defend this practice on the ground of moral fitness will hardly be attempted. There is a glaring disproportion between the punishment intended, and the crime alleged. But under certain circumstances it is said, if a man do not either give or accept a challenge, he loses his honor, that is, his popularity. Now, suppose this person were a little more unfortunate than he is; and lived among those, with whom it was unpopular to pay one's debts, or to fulfil a promise, how can he be assured, that he would not neglect both on the same principle on which he justifies an action, far more criminal than such neglect.

But if you require examples of true magnanimity—conduct which covers its authors with real, unfading glory, they may be obtained in large number from the sacred volume. Such was the conduct of him, whose mental and personal accomplishments

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had, in spite of every impediment, placed him in the high confidence of Pharaoh's chief captain; and who, while alluring blandishments and bright prospects were on one side,—integrity, disgrace, and danger on the other, nobly exclaimed: How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Such was the conduct of the first advocates of Christianity, who, when forbidden by the rulers of the Jewish church to preach in the name of Jesus, answered: Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more than unto God, judge ye. Such was the conduct of those noble Jews, who were raised from the condition of captives to preside over the affairs of the province of Babylon. When called to make their election between a public act of idolatry, in which thousands were engaged, and immediate death in its most terrifying form, they answered without even requiring time to deliberate: If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up. Proofs of an independent spirit more noble than these, can neither be found in the history of the world, nor even painted to the imagination. With such characters would you compare the spirit of a duellist, the spirit of a self-murderer, or the spirit of him, who sets at defiance wholesome laws and moral restraints? Can you see the least resemblance between him, who sacrifices reputation and life to moral fitness and the will of God, and him, who in contempt of both, makes similar sacrifices either to his own passions, or to the applause of those who think as little, and act as rashly as himself? If there be true dignity on earth, it is found in the character of him whose heart is the seat of true piety. He is engaged on the same side with his Maker, and receives his best enjoyments from the same sources. Nor is it possible that these should fail, while the immutability of God remains. The security and independence of no creature is equal to theirs, to whom the Almighty has said: Because I live, ye shall live also.

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There is no occasion on which independence of mind is more indispensable, than in the forming of religious opinions. As neither the greatest antiquity, nor the highest human authority, can make that a Scripture doctrine, which the Scriptures disown; so, if a proposition be sanctioned by these writings, the greatest ingenuity, the broadest mirth, or the most poignant wit, will neither annihilate its truth, nor diminish its value. If Christianity be a revelation, it is a revelation of something. Had not that which it reveals been of high import, divine wisdom would not have resorted to such extraordinary expedients to make it known. As Jesus Christ came to bear witness to the truth, it cannot be a matter of indifference, either that you deny what he taught, or believe, as under the sanction of his authority, that to which he gave no countenance. You are bound, by a diligent, impartial, and devout investigation of Scripture, to ascertain its leading sentiments, and the terms on which human offenders may obtain absolution and eternal life. You are bound to this, because you are intelligent beings, and belong to that species, for whom the instructions and blessings of Christianity were intended, and will soon partake in that eternal retribution which it reveals. You are bound to this because correct views of inspired truth have the happiest tendency to preserve you amidst allurements, to secure present usefulness and permanent reputation. In regard to them, we may use the language of the king of Israel: Bind them continually about thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, they shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, they shall keep thee; when thou wakest, they shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.

And now, may God Almighty, whose munificence has enabled your parents to give you, at this early age, the means of instruction, and by whose good providence, you have been preserved to rejoice with them in the scenes and exercises of this day—give direction to your future life, grant a prosperous issue to

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every just undertaking, purify your hearts by his word and Spirit —place underneath you in the hour of death, the arms of his mercy—and grant you a place among those "who love the appearing and kingdom of Jesus Christ."

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1811.

Young Gentlemen,

We now experience emotions, not dissimilar to those, which were felt by your parents, when, to form a connexion with this seminary, you retired from their presence and tuition. They could not contemplate, without anxiety, your removal from them at a season, when youth rendered you peculiarly sensible to temptation, and your powers of resistance had not been sufficiently tried. At present, though your ability to maintain a correct, moral, deportment is increased by acquired knowledge and additional years; the extent of your responsibility is, by these very advantages, enlarged. Having more information, you have, by consequence, power and influence, either to improve or abuse.

Instead of a general repetition of those cautions and moral precepts, which have so frequently been given, I would direct your attention to a single principle, the influence of which is universal; but peculiarly strong on persons in early life; I mean the love of praise.

To know, in what manner, this principle is to be treated, it is necessary to ascertain its nature. If it is morally good, it is by all means to be cherished; if morally bad, it must be exterminated. But if it is neither the one, nor the other, it may be regulated according to its utility.

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I remark in the first place, that the love of praise is not morally good. It is common, in some degree, to men of all characters, and by no means proportionate to the state of moral feelings. The man, most habituated to deep practical views of Christian morality, has a breast, far less agitated by the desire of human applause, than the youthful, adventurous warrior, of whose calculation the matter of duty and virtue makes no part. Now if the love of praise is, in itself, morally good, the stronger it is, the more, other things being equal, will there be of moral goodness; or, if it is the result of moral goodness, when it is strongest, the heart must of necessity be most virtuous.

Besides, if this principle were, in strictness of speech, virtuous, there could be no danger in resigning ourselves to its influence. But that there would, in doing this, be the highest degree of danger, can be doubted by no one who reflects on those splendid characters, whether in ancient or modern times, "whose ruling passion was the lust of praise." To persons thus impelled by ambition, the Roman satirist attributes the fall of his country:

"—Patriam tamen obruit olim
Gloria paucorum, et laudis titulique cupido."

But you will probably be told, that these exorbitancies proceed from the excess of a virtuous principle.

By virtuous principle must be meant, either virtue itself, or something distinct from it. If the latter, that is, if the love of praise be something distinct from virtue, it is precisely what I am endeavoring to inculcate. But if by virtuous principle be meant virtue itself, the assertion is, that moral evil proceeds from an excess of moral goodness. Now moral goodness consists in conformity to the requirements of our Creator. It is, therefore, just as absurd to tell of excess in virtue, as to speak of excess in the straightness of a line. It is just as absurd, to say that exorbitancies can arise from the excess of virtue, as to say, that two lines may coincide so precisely, as not to coincide at all.

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But, if the love of praise be not virtuous, you are ready to ask me, with some ardor, whether it be vicious? I answer, it is neither the one nor the other; but is it to be ranked among those native propensities of the human mind, which have in themselves no moral character, such as the social, parental, and filial affections, and the love of happiness. Were the principle of which I am speaking, criminal in itself, appeals would not have been so frequently made to it, in the sacred Scriptures: A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor, rather than silver and gold. Them, that honor me, I will honor; but they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

If the love of praise be not a moral quality, it is to be cherished, governed, or exterminated, as the effects, resulting from it, are favorable or injurious to the virtue and peace of society. That much use is made of the principle, in all governments, from that of a private family, to that of an empire, cannot be questioned. The first law made known to a child, is the will of his parents; and the sanction of this law is their approbation or displeasure. If this approbation were never expressed, or, what is in effect the same thing, if the child had no regard to their opinion, it requires not a moment's reflection to be convinced, that the habits of childhood would be far less correct than they are at present; and that the relation between parents and children would be far less interesting and delightful.

In civil governments the love of praise is distinctly recognized; and dishonor is considered a punishment, no less than amercement, or bodily mutilation. Regard to character supersedes the necessity of an indefinite multiplication of statutes and punishments. And, in respect to external decency and correctness, it is a substitute for moral principle, poor indeed, but decidedly more effectual, than any other.

The influence which it has on youth, who associate for literary or scientific purposes, is clearly perceived, and is felt, perhaps, in a greater or less degree, in every literary exercise.

By those who condemn all appeals to the principle of which we are speaking, it will be said by way of objection, that a sense

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of duty ought to supersede the necessity of all other motives; and, that when we appeal to the love of praise, we do but strengthen and inflame a principle, which is acknowledged to produce, on many occasions, the most dangerous effects. It is readily conceded, that a sense of duty—a regard to the divine law, ought to be the predominating motive of every action; and that no actions, originating from other motives, will, at the final decision, receive either reward or approbation. If all men were what they ought to be, and were not, as they doubtless are, in a state of moral degradation, other motives, perhaps, than a sense of duty, would not be necessary, either to stimulate or restrain. But if a great proportion of mankind are destitute of this inward affection for virtue, this love of duty for its own sake, and yet there are no other propensities, which may lawfully be resorted to, all government, all restraints, and successful persuasion, are clearly at an end. Indeed, human laws, sanctioned as they are by temporal penalties, which bring into action either self love, or the love of character, must, on this supposition, be abrogated, as having an immoral tendency. But what would the objector say to divine laws, the most of which are sanctioned by the rewards and punishments of a future life, and some of them by advantages or evils, to be enjoyed or suffered in the present? But especially, what would he say to those many addresses in Scripture, which are expressly directed to the love of reputation and the fear of shame? Two of these passages have been already mentioned; in addition to which, we might notice our Saviour's caution to his disciples, not to obtrude themselves into elevated places, lest they should receive public dishonor; but to choose rather the lowest seat; in which case, any alteration that might be proposed, would be noticed to their advantage.

But though the authority now adduced, is paramount to all others, and perfectly decisive, it may not be amiss to observe, in answer to those who would extirpate the love of praise, because it sometimes grows into a criminal and desolating ambition, that, on the same principle, the social and parental affec-

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tions must be eradicated; for they too may be so far indulged, as to countervail the most imperious dictates of morality.

We come to the conclusion, that the love of praise is not to be extirpated; but forever to be kept subordinate to the glory of God, and the interests of his empire.

When, therefore, we hear Cicero professing a regard for "the consenting praise of all honest men, and the incorrupt testimony of those who can judge of excellent merit," we find nothing to condemn. "It is not beneath a man of the greatest dignity and wisdom," says the profound Edwards, "to value the wise and just esteem of others, however inferior to him. The contrary, instead of being an expression of greatness of mind, would show a haughty and mean spirit."

But when we hear this same Roman orator declaring, "that there is not an instance of a man's exerting himself ever with praise and virtue in the dangers of his country, who was not drawn to it by the hopes of glory, and posterity," meaning hereby the approbation of posterity, we cannot fail to perceive, that talents, the most surprising and various, and under the highest possible cultivation, are inadequate to discover, without celestial light, the only true and solid ground of moral duty; and to apply to the most enlightened among the heathen moralists, the words of the poet:

> "— Tanto major famæ sitis, est quam
> Virtutis; quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam,
> Præmia si tollas."

The love of reputation will contribute to the correctness of morals, so long as the latter is in good repute. And, considering how much the understandings of all men approve what is right, and how much it is for the interest even of the vicious, that others should act with integrity and good faith, it is hardly to be presumed, that virtuous deportment will ever be generally, or extensively disreputable. A comprehensive regard to the opinions of men, especially in countries where Christianity is taught with tolerable clearness, will always, therefore, it may

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be presumed, tend in a greater or less degree, to promote regularity of life.

I am speaking, you will observe, of conduct externally correct and virtuous. But even in regard to this, the unrestrained love of popularity may lead to consequences, most to be deprecated. For, though it is true, that mankind in general, however vicious, do not approve vice in others, it may be your misfortune to associate with many individuals, whose passions, prejudices, or interest will lead them to praise what is wrong, and condemn what is right. You may reside in places, where, not indeed the great principles of morality are denied, and their opposites applauded; but where many customs, inconsistent with Christian morals, are supported by universal suffrage. And, though the consenting opinion of enlightened and good men of various ages and countries can hardly be supposed erroneous, on practical subjects; the opinions of individual good men are by no means an infallible guide. They may so connect their own interest and that of their party, with the great interests of probity and truth, as to suppose whatever is favorable to the one, cannot fail eventually, of advancing the other.

It is evident therefore, that were you allowed to make external correctness your ultimate object, the love of character, though a valuable auxiliary, would not secure you from danger. How much less, when it is considered, that in the divine estimation, your intentions and disposition are the only measure of good or ill desert.

Should you, as you doubtless will on many occasions, be in danger of violating conscience by the sacrifice of duty to human applause, resort instantly for aid to reason and revealed truth; set before yourselves the immutability of the divine character and law; consider whether retrospection on the praise of mortals will silence a conscience, which imminent death has rendered tumultuous; and whether those who have been for many centuries, suffering a retribution, are now consoled by reflecting on the splendor or popularity of their crimes.

To seek reputation, not for its own sake, but for the benevo-

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lent purpose of rendering greater services to God and your country, is unquestionably an act of virtue. To this your obligations are as solemn and powerful, as to any other duty of benevolence or piety. Let me remind you, that reputation is a plant, delicate in its nature, and by no means rapid in its growth. It will not shoot up like the gourd which shaded the prophet's head; but, like that same gourd, it may perish in a night.

To secure solid and endless glory, a principle of moral rectitude is indispensable. In this there is vigor, uniformity, and duration. It varies not with human opinions. It is the same, whether it appear in the beggar, or the prince; in the man of rustic or cultivated manners. It is the same in deserts and in crowded cities—in the camp and the pulpit, the work-shop and the forum. It is the same, whether on the earth beneath, or in the heavens above. If there are, in the extreme parts of the universe, intelligent beings, whom God views with approbation, they are influenced by the same principle which governs virtuous men. No matter what forms they possess. No matter how many suns or systems lie between, they belong to the same family—there is an essential uniformity in their characters, and their motives, in their objects of love and aversion.

The principle of which I am speaking, whether it be called benevolence, the love of order, fitness, or rectitude, is law not only to all dependent virtuous beings, but to their divine Sovereign. Under its influence he exerts his intelligence and power. It is this alone, which renders his own character lovely.

Young Gentlemen,—To urge your attention to religion, and to the scenes of an opening eternity, is a duty which I owe to your parents and to you. At this anniversary there are circumstances, which would render the omission peculiarly criminal. The grave has been recently opened to receive one from your number.* He, who would have shared with you, the anxiety and the honors of this day, is now reposing beneath the clods of the valley. He has entered upon a state, in which other connexions and other employments engross his attention. He holds that

* Lewis Page, of Readfield.

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station under the government of God, which infinite wisdom and benevolence ordained. By what is he distinguished from us? in dying? No—but only in dying first.

"Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis."

Let me recommend to you a close attention to the sacred Scriptures. With these no writings can be compared, as to the clearness with which they exhibit the condition, the character, the duties, and destiny of man. They will teach you what relation the present life bears to another. They will inform you how to use your powers, whether natural or acquired—even in His service, who redeemed the world by the blood of his Son. Endeavor to obtain deep and correct views of these divine oracles. It is not enough that they obtain your intellectual assent. It is not enough that you praise their sublimity, and the purity of that moral system which they inculcate; you must be so imbued with their spirit and their principles, as to become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Then shall the influence of religion be felt in every stage of your mortal existence. It will repress your passions—moderate your too sanguine hopes—prevent despondency, and diminish fear—and teach you to rest on the eternal Providence of God. It will shed light and glory round a dying bed, and secure you admission into that world, where "there is no more death, nor sorrow, nor sighing, but where all tears shall be wiped away from all faces."

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1812.

Young Gentlemen,

It has been long since remarked, by one, whose discernment has never been called in question, that "the constitution of human creatures is such, that they are capable of becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified." The human mind, no less than the body, is susceptible of great changes, from the circumstances, in which it is placed, and from the attention and culture which it receives. It is on these well known facts, that the whole system of education is founded; and, in proportion as this susceptibility of change in the human mind is greater or less, is the importance of education decreased or augmented; and in proportion to our belief of the alteration, which may be produced, either in the direction or strength of the different mental qualities, will be our cheerfulness and ardor in their cultivation.

The youth, who is easily persuaded, that he has received from nature a treacherous memory, esteems as fruitless, all endeavors to cherish or invigorate that power. If he finds in his fancy neither exuberance nor vivacity, despairing of eminence in any department in literature, in which imagination is required, he concludes that if success of any kind awaits him, it is to be met in those studies, in which the intellect is alone employed. If he finds, in relation to those sciences, in which numbers and quantities are concerned, less readiness, than is displayed by

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others of his own standing, he concludes that the kind of talents, necessary for a mathematician has been denied him, and either abandons studies of this nature, or pursues them with hopeless indifference. For young gentlemen, who are either commencing or closing a collegiate life, it is, therefore, a matter of much importance to have just ideas, as to the command, which the mind has over its own powers; and not to attribute, to its original constitution, that, which is the fair result of circumstances and habit.

There is no faculty, perhaps, which is thought to be bestowed with greater inequality, than memory. And though I am far from asserting, that this is distributed to all men in equal portions, a little attention to your own intellectual habits, or to those of other persons, will convince you, that the power of treasuring up facts and bringing them into use, is less the gift of nature, than the result of mental discipline. It is not uncommon to find individuals, whose memories are astonishingly tenacious of particular facts, but whose ability to retain general knowledge does not exceed the ordinary kind. Now, it is incredible, that the memory should originally possess an aptness for retaining one particular description of ideas rather than another. He, who can treasure up anecdotes, and have them forever at hand, when wanted, will be able with the same facility, to remember dates in chronology, facts in history, and proportions in geometry, whenever these subjects, whether by effort or casuality, become equally familiar or interesting. For a similar reason, he, who is able to write or to understand a well digested treatise on commerce, or politics, should never complain, that nature has denied him the power of understanding disquisitions in mathematics or ontology. At the present time indeed, it may be far more difficult for him to fix his attention on some of these subjects, than on others; and his success in the investigation of them will be proportionate. But this difficulty results, it may be, from habits which took their rise from education, or other circumstances, foreign to the original structure of the mind. Whenever a subject is connected with ideas of advantage or self complacency,

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we give it a cordial welcome, however frequent may be its recurrence; and the greatest advances will doubtless be made in those studies, which give us most pleasure. If that employment, to which you have at present, the greatest inclination, is likely to be as advantageous to the public, to your friends, and to yourselves, as a different pursuit, there is no reason why it should not be adopted. The effort requisite to produce a change in your present taste is, in that case, unnecessary. The attention implied in such effort, would be better employed on those studies, which are the object of your choice. But, if your situation or connexions be such as to render a particular institution of life decidedly more advantageous and suitable, than another, you need not be deterred from pursuing it, though your present taste should lead in a different direction; for, as this propensity is probably a matter of your own creation, or the result of circumstances, by a change in the latter, united to your own efforts, it may be annihilated. But, whatever may be your profession, remember that the cultivation of your mental powers is a solemn duty, which you owe to Him, by whom they were bestowed. He has not left it to your option, whether to make the most, or the least of them. He requires you to do the former. And permit me to assure you, that the habits whether of indolence or study, which you commence on leaving this seminary, will have no inconsiderable effect on your future characters.

From the early age, at which you have completed the usual course of college studies, you may imagine, that no material injury would arise from spending a few years, either in idleness, or what is little better, in light reading, directed to no particular object. Be cautious how you indulge such an opinion. A few years, especially at your age, is a valuable part of human life. To waste these in mental inaction would be the worst kind of prodigality. In addition to this, habits of systematical application could not afterwards be resumed without great effort and resolution.

By reflecting on what is past, you may take encouragement concerning the future. From the knowledge which you-

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have acquired in four years, estimate the acquisitions, which are possible to you in ten, twenty, or thirty. Besides, your intellectual powers being more matured and better disciplined, you will be able to arrange your ideas with greater method—to judge with more accuracy of what you read—and to select with more discretion what ought to be retained.

And there is, belonging to the human mind, a variety of powers, and these bestowed by our Creator, we may be assured, that they are well adapted to each other; and of course, while one is cultivated, the rest should by no means be neglected. This would be doing a kind of violence to our natures—it would be to disarrange that order, and to disturb that proportion, which unerring wisdom has instituted. If there is one of these powers, whether memory, judgment, fancy, or imagination, which you suppose to be at present feebler than the rest, wisdom requires that by more than ordinary attention to it, you endeavor to remedy the present defect. If the memory retain with difficulty, store it with those ideas only, which are worth preserving. Endeavor to render these as interesting as possible—and frequently recal them to the mind. Associate things difficult to be retained, with those which you are in no danger of forgetting, that the recurrence of the one may be accompanied by the return of the other.

If you desire to add strength and acumen to your judgment, be at pains to acquire clear and distinct ideas of the objects, concerning which it is to be employed. Minutely observe all circumstances, which should influence your conclusion. In this way, the artificer, the merchant, the physician, and the mineralogist, acquire in their respective departments, an accuracy of judging, which, to others, has the appearance of intuition.

Nor are the fancy and imagination less subject to human control, or less susceptible of improvement than the other powers of the mind. If you accustom yourselves to trace the analogies, which a particular object bears to others, whenever you have occasion to discourse or to write concerning this object, these analogies will present themselves by the power of association,

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and will afford you an opportunity of forming such images, as may serve either for illustration or ornament. It will tend much to increase both the vigor and correctness of your imagination, occasionally to peruse, with attention, standard works in poetry, whether of Grecian, Roman, or British origin. Such perusal, as it is necessary to the highest improvement of your mental powers, becomes a matter, not of convenience only, but of obligation.

I have made these remarks with the greater confidence, both of their correctness and utility, supported, as many of them are by an author, to whom you have been recently attending; an author, whose unassuming manner, wonderful perspicacity, profound knowledge of his subject, and elegance, perhaps I might say, perfection of style, has given charm and brilliancy even to the subject of metaphysics.

If your literary character depends so much on circumstances, and your own efforts, you will not doubt, that in regard to your moral character, these are equally important. For both these reasons, be cautious with whom you associate. Cultivate the society of men of knowledge, and men of principle. Choose rather to be with these, whose intellectual and moral acquirements exceed your own, than with those from whom you have nothing to learn. There cannot be conceived a more depraved ambition, than that of being chieftain of a clan, composed of the ignorant, disorderly, and profligate. The sentiment, "Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven," is fit only for that being, to whom it has been attributed by the poet. It is sufficient honor for a young gentleman, and such he ought to esteem it, to be admitted to the society of literary and virtuous men. In conversation with such, or with others, give your own opinion but sparingly; and never on subjects, with which you are unacquainted—least of all should it be done in language, positive or assuming. To retract an erroneous opinion modestly expressed, will give you little or no mortification. But to acknowledge an error, which you have boldly asserted, will cost you a painful

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effort; and your positiveness will excite, according to the temper of your opponent, either pity, contempt, or irritation.

Some persons consider it as a point of honor to defend every sentiment which they advance, however hastily formed, or how little soever they are conversant with the subject, to which it relates. Nothing can more clearly indicate both the want of talents and want of integrity. If you are conscious of possessing talents, you will not fear their being called in question, either because you are unable to show that to be true, which is not so, or because another person, who has attended to a subject more than yourself, understands it better.

I could not be justified in closing this address, without introducing the subject of your relations to God and a future state.

It seems at present, to be a well established opinion in philosophy, that there is no other connexion between cause and effect, than coincidence of time; that all motion, whether in celestial, animal, or vegetable bodies, is not to be attributed to any power inherent in matter, but to an immediate divine agency. The bearing which the doctrine has upon religion, is most important. The Divinity is not only around you, but is immediately operating throughout your whole animal system. His agency was not more direct, when he said: Let there be light, and there was light; or when Jesus exclaimed: Lazarus, come forth, than it now is in the beating of your pulse, the motion of your limbs, or the expansion of your lungs. In the most emphatical sense, is it true, that "in him we live and move, and have our being." With the same emphasis may we pronounce, that "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.

Now, if the divine care is not, for a moment, intermitted in regard to the plants of the field, or the trees of the forest—if Deity interests himself in the minutest parts of your animal system, is it possible to imagine him indifferent to your character and moral feelings? Those notices of God, which every object in nature is constantly presenting, will therefore be forever troub-

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lesome to a mind, conscious of hostility to his moral attributes. To the good man, on the contrary, all the objects of nature afford pledges of security and eternal life, as they indicate the care and agency of a friend, omniscient and almighty.

> "The meanest flow'ret of the vale,
> The simplest note, that swells the gale,
> The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening paradise."

So far as you oppose, or neglect religion, you are at warfare with reason, with moral feelings, and with God.

The moment you deserve the name of Christians, this conflict terminates, your heart and intellect are reconciled, and you have identified your interest with that of your Maker.

Young Gentlemen—I wish for each of you a character formed on the principles of Christianity. I wish for each one of you as much wealth, and influence, and honor, as are consistent with your highest moral elevation, and with your final enjoyment of that crown, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall confer on his saints, at the day of his appearing.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1813.

Young Gentlemen,

From receiving the honors, to which, by your habits and proficiency in science, you are now entitled, I will detain you but a short time, by those observations, which have occurred to me, on harmony of character.

Whatever be the design in painting or poetry, whether to excite emotions of gloominess or joy, we expect to find, and are dissatisfied at not finding such objects, and such combinations, as, either by their nature, or by the connexion in which they stand, contribute to the intended effect. If, in the group of objects thus collected, any are found of discordant qualities; if, in a scene, designed to produce joy, any objects are intermixed tending to excite grief or gloominess; or, if, in a scene designed to excite the latter emotions, we discover any thing gay or ludicrous, the discovery never fails, not only to obstruct the general effect, but likewise to produce pain.

These remarks are introduced, for the purpose of illustrating those, in which we are more interested.

As the general beauty of the natural world consists much in that variety, which is constituted by objects adapted to different purposes; so the beauty and happiness of civil society depend, in no small degree, on that variety of character, which is the result of different pursuits, or of having in view different objects.

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And as beauty in painting, architecture or poetry, in natural or artificial scenery, consists much in the parts being so formed and adjusted, as to contribute to that general effect, which is the apparent object of the work; so the beauty of a particular character is greatly heightened, when all its parts are discovered to be subservient to that object, whose accomplishment is intended. Professions or employments in life, whose immediate objects are very different, may, notwithstanding, in an equal degree, contribute both to individual and public happiness.

In the election which you make, it is not permitted to consult your own, much less your temporal advantage exclusively. Not only divine wisdom, but uninspired philosophy has taught us, that we are not born for ourselves, but that, as all the fruits of the earth are produced for the sake of man, so are men created for each other. In a matter so important as the choice of a profession, on which your future cast of character and standing in society will greatly depend, your best judgment is to be deliberately employed. But when a choice is thus made;—when you have determined on that institution of life, in which you believe, can be best answered the great purpose for which life was given,—to that let your efforts, your studies, and your habits be accommodated. I know, indeed, that to some favored individuals, Heaven has been pleased to impart intellectual powers, so rich and various, as to enable them to become well versed in the science of different professions, and to acquire, in addition to this, an extensive acquaintance with most of those subjects, which are open to human investigation. To them may be applied the praise, lately bestowed on a British statesman: "There is not a subject presented to him, even casually, in which his ability is not conspicuous."

But persons of this description are so uncommon, and when they do appear, are so marked out for their high destination, that men of usual, or even very respectable talents, are wholly without excuse for mistaking themselves to be of this number. The rays of ordinary genius falling intensely on one point, will make some impression; whereas, if diffused over a large surface,

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they will scarcely be felt. If, therefore, you determine on a profession, determine at the same time, to make the most of your talents in that profession.

I do not advise you thus, because in the course here prescribed, ambition is most sure to be gratified, though such unquestionably is the fact; but because I am persuaded that, generally speaking, the interests of society are best promoted, when individual attention is much directed to individual objects. If, for example, the happiness of those around you will be advanced by your cultivating the healing art, it will still more be advanced, if, in that art, you become skilful. If duty requires you to become a counsellor or advocate, it requires you to qualify yourself for giving good counsel, and for making an able defence.

If duty directs you to be a soldier, it likewise directs you to cultivate not only personal courage, but a systematic acquaintance with the science of war. And if you have reason to believe, that the divine Author of our most holy religion requires you to unfold its doctrines and enforce its precepts, can you doubt the obligation lying on you to do this in the most interesting, judicious and powerful manner? It is, indeed, almost a contradiction to allow, that any profession contributes to the virtue and happiness of men, unless we at the same time allow, that eminence in such professions, would, in a higher degree, accomplish this object. It is without question, your duty to cultivate all the powers of the human mind, and not only to retain, but augment those general acquirements, which you have already made. What I wish to inculcate is, the importance of bringing all these to bear upon that institution of life, which, on taking an enlightened view of your own powers, and the wants of society, you shall deliberately and conscientiously choose.

To effect this, that is, to render your present and future acquisitions tributary to one leading object, will be easy, just in proportion to the interest and ardor, which that object excites. By ardent and intense application to a subject, you obtain a knowledge, not only of its more obvious, but of its more remote relations; and when any thing is represented either to the eye,

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the ear, or the understanding, which may have even a slight bearing on such a subject, the mind will seize upon it with incredible facility and readiness.

But it may still be asked, whether the great design of our existence, which is to secure our own happiness and to promote that of others, can be as well answered by devoting the mind to one object as by dividing it among many.

As to the first, viz. personal enjoyment, so far as it depends on the kind of pursuit, I appeal to you, whether those who are strongly attached to their profession, or to any particular departments in science, do not appear to be more happy on that very account.

As to the second, that is, the happiness of others, the case is still more clear. Eminence in a profession is important, we have seen, for the same reason, which renders the profession important. If the interests of society require one, they likewise require the other. And that eminence is to be attained only by concentrating the mind, cases of extraordinary genius being excepted, is too obvious to need proof. And further, as to making discoveries in science, or illustrating them, these are generally the result of attention, directed to a particular object or department. But if the discovery be made, it is immaterial, whether by one person or twenty, as it is henceforward held among scientific men, as common property, and its application to the purposes of life becomes general. In fine, if the common arts of life are carried to a greater perfection by a division of labor, than if every man should undertake to fabricate for himself, his utensils, clothing and furniture; and if the former arrangement be more favorable than the latter to the happiness of human society, it undeniably follows, as a general truth, that those who embrace any one of what are called the learned professions, will, by assiduous attention to it, best discharge the debt which they owe to the public.

Nor need you be under any apprehension lest the method here prescribed, should contract the mind by confining its powers. For the more ardently and thoroughly you study a pro-

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fession, the more numerous will its relations appear, and the greater, by consequence, will be the number of objects, which may be rendered subservient to it.

I would by no means, encourage you to form romantic or extravagant expectations. But there is no impropriety in a young man's aiming at a point of excellence, to which persons of his condition and talents have not usually attained; because the best use is seldom made of all the powers, which are given. An elevated stand, constantly in view, will stimulate to corresponding efforts. "To the exaggerated conception of eloquence which perpetually revolved in the mind of Cicero," I use the words of an author, with whom you are all familiar, "to that idea, which haunted his thoughts, of *aliquid immensum infinitumque;* we are indebted for some of the most splendid displays of human genius; and it is probable, that something of the same kind has been felt by every man, who has risen much above the level of humanity, either in speculation or action."

In addition to the preceding remarks, I would observe that different shades of character are formed not only by different professions, but likewise by different offices and situations in life; and though rules of morality are the same to all men, there are certain things of minor consideration, in regard to which, precisely the same deportment is not in all men equally proper. That, which in one character passes without any just animadversion, would not in another be thought either prudent or decorous. Attention to times, places, and circumstances is as essential to that harmony of character, without which no person, whether in conspicuous or obscure life, can accomplish all that good, which is placed within his power. Your obligation, therefore, to regard decency and propriety, even in respect to actions, in themselves indifferent, becomes in this view of the matter strictly moral. So thought Paul, who inculcates on his disciples "whatsoever things are of good report."

But, though it is suitable, that there should be, in this life, a diversity in human pursuits, and the distinct parcels of character, so to speak, should be selected and arranged, in such a manner, as to produce a consistent and uniform whole, the par-

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ticular characters, thus produced, are to be made strictly subservient to a more general object; I mean the glory of God, and the happiness and virtue of mankind.

In building a palace or a temple, the various parts are assigned to different hands; the immediate object is to finish that part, which is allotted to each. But, the ultimate and grand design being to complete the edifice, each part becomes important no otherwise, than as it contributes to the strength, symmetry, and beauty of the whole. The obligations of man as a rational and free agent, are, in no degree, dependent on his office, his rank, or employment. Particular actions become duties according to the varieties of human life; but as to moral feelings, as to the end, which men are bound to pursue, religion, whether natural or revealed, admits no diversity. It is the same to him whose brow is encircled by the diadem, and to him who roams the forest, and seeks shelter among its rocks and caverns. It is the same to him, who commands armies, and him, who, to use the language of a Christian poet,

> "—Trains to glorious war,
> The sacramental host of God's elect."

Whether your lives be spent in action or study, you owe them to God, and to those interests of virtue, and order, which are now protected, and will be finally secured, by the perfections of his nature. Harmony of character will never be perfect, nor very extensive, until there be a fixed moral principle; a cordial, as well as intellectual assent to the Christian religion. Determine not to violate the principles of reason and virtue. Whatever objects appear themselves to your judgment, as permanently valuable, let them be pursued with inflexible resolution. Dispel that mist, which gives unnatural magnitude to things present, and prevents any distinct vision of that which is future. The present will soon be past, and the future will be present.

As by retiring from academic walls, and presenting yourselves somewhat more conspicuously in the view of society, your sphere of action will be enlarged, permit me to remind you, that the period will soon arrive, when you will be introduced to scenes vastly more important and extensive.

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Though the term of human probation is so short, that on earth we scarcely commence our being, yet even in this state, we form a character, to which eternity itself will but give enlargement, and durability.

In your progress through life, you are permitted to cherish hope, but are not allowed to make presumptuous calculations on the years to come. In the premature death of an instructor,* on whose whole deportment, religion shed a lustre, mild and clear, and beneficent; to whose memory friendship has, this day, delighted to bring her copious offerings, we have had a painful comment on the words of inspiration: Thou destroyest the hope of man. But as believers in revealed religion, as disciples of Him, who is the resurrection and the life, we are encouraged to direct our eyes to the hill of Zion, on which grows neither the yew nor the cypress.

Young Gentlemen,—We wish to see, in your characters, all those qualities, which are essential to our natures, mingled and softened, invigorated or restrained by the potent influence of Christian piety. Be kind and affectionate without weakness; humble without servility; and prudent without duplicity and artifice. Maintain an independent spirit and unsullied integrity, without offensive and boisterous manners. Discharge your duty to society without being contaminated by its vices. Cultivate a temper uniformly cheerful, resulting from reflection, and not from the want of it; a cheerfulness, produced by a firm confidence in the wisdom, beneficence, and activity of that Power, by which the universe is governed. Recognise this power in every occurrence, and not less in the fading of a leaf than in the fall of an empire. Commence and maintain a life of Christian virtue, and rest assured, that, whatever changes may await you on earth, and whatever untried scenes may be presented in that state, which is now invisible: neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, shall separate you from the love of God.

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* Frederic Southgate, A. B. Tutor, who died May 29, 1812.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1814.

Young Gentlemen,

In the composition of human beings, we distinguish the body, the intellect, and the heart. The cultivation of these, demands our attention in proportion to their respective importance. Of bodily powers, agility and physical strength are the principal, if not the only, constituents. By the intellect we perceive, compare, abstract, and form conclusions. Their province extends to moral, not less than to other relations. Moral ideas, together with their relations, are as truly objects of intellect, as are ideas of number or quantity. Perceiving these relations, we discern the reality of duty and the fitness of actions. But though the obligations of virtue are discerned by the understanding, the understanding is not the seat of moral virtue. There is no conceivable state of the intellect, of which we can predicate either virtue or vice. Moral dispositions or affections, are distinct from the understanding; and in these consist whatever, in accountable beings, is worthy of praise or blame.

On this distinction are grounded those few remarks, which the present interesting occasion gives me an opportunity of addressing to you, relative to that union, which ought ever to be maintained between piety and good morals on the one hand, and literature and science on the other. Mind, however capacious, if perverted, does not raise its possessor so much above brute animals, as it leaves him inferior to the man of moral goodness.

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So long as the moral character is debased, I know not whether it is desirable, that the intellect should be improved. Knowledge gives power, which is injurious or beneficent, according to the manner in which it is used. Physical strength will be dangerous, if guided by brute impulse; but infinitely more so, if under the direction of perverted intellect. Give to the tiger human sagacity, and after having desolated the forest, he will invade the habitations of men, and form a wilderness for himself in the midst of rich plantations or populous cities. Give to the leviathan intellect proportionate to his bodily powers, and navies will no longer dare to traverse the ocean.

But you may ask, whether reason does not applaud virtue; and whether the latter will not be cherished, in proportion as the former is improved? I answer, that reason does unquestionably applaud virtue; and, the more the science of ethics is studied, and the relations of man examined, the more clearly will appear the reality and strength of those obligations, which bind man to the Author of his being. But particular subjects may be neglected, while the intellectual powers in general are highly cultivated. The use made of the intellect, will depend on the moral character. If that be corrupt, there will probably be a disinclination to those subjects, which lead to conclusions unfolding either the turpitude or the consequences of vice. In the character of a man of study, it is no more implied, that he is versed in the theory of morals, than that he is an adept in botany, mathematics, or political economy. Gross ignorance of moral truths is sometimes betrayed by those, who, in many of the walks of science, have left ordinary men far behind; and the obligations and duties of life are not only better discharged, but as well understood by the unlettered cottager, as by some, whose time has been assiduously devoted to study. With the former, morality may have been the only subject of investigation. With the other, it may be among the few which have been overlooked.

But, with whatever attention or success the science of virtue may have been explored, the reality is a distinct object; and

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between the two there is no necessary or invariable connexion. Most evidently, therefore, you must not take it for granted, that the heart is meliorating, because the memory may be strengthened, the powers of discernment rendered more acute, and the imagination enlivened. The Greeks and Romans gave to the human intellect, perhaps, as high a polish as it is capable of receiving. But if we inquire for a pure morality, we are referred to the Scythians, or back to the time when Saturn himself had not assumed the visage of manhood. Those very periods, in which literary taste was refined even to fastidiousness, were distinguished by moral insensibility, and by multiplied acts of atrocious cruelty, not less than by licentiousness, the most unlimited, and the most disgusting. Many among the celebrated relics of antiquity, it is well known, are monuments at once of the cultivated talents, and moral degradation of their authors and their age. Even philosophical studies, which, more than all others, might be expected to subdue the passions and reclaim the irregularities of the heart, have been found inadequate to the object. You will not learn temperance of Arcesilaus or Lacidas, nor the contempt of pleasure from Aristippus.

It being certain, that the cultivation of the intellectual powers does not necessarily imply virtue, either in principle or practice, I request you to look attentively at the different effects on civil society, produced by literature and science, as they are combined or not with sentiments of religion. To whom is the cause of social order and human happiness most indebted—to such philosophers as Boulanger, Condorcet, and Dupuis, or to Locke, Newton, and Sir William Jones? None of these distinguished characters lived without effect. The influence of their example and writings has been discovered in families—it has been felt in deliberative assemblies, by nations, and by the whole civilized world. In regard to the latter, their wonderful powers were employed either directly or indirectly to establish those great principles, which lie at the foundation of religion, both natural and revealed. Whether they investigated the laws of mind or of matter, they considered them as originating with an

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intelligent Lawgiver, of whose existence and agency they discovered new evidence, in proportion as they passed beyond the boundaries, by which human knowledge had been previously circumscribed. In the victories which they gained over ignorance and error, they dedicated their richest spoils to the Author of nature, "the knowledge and veneration of whom," says Mr. Locke, "is the chief end of all our thoughts, and the proper business of all our understandings."

It is surprising, with what facility we make almost every subject tributary to that, with which our minds are most deeply impressed. Who would expect to find the truths of revelation corroborated by the study of heathen mythology, or by researches into the history of the modern Orientals? Yet I need not repeat the name of that illustrious scholar and statesman, who, through such a medium, "saw the star of Christ in the East, and fell down to worship him."

But atheistic philosophers have been even more assiduous in propagating infidelity, than Christian philosophers to establish and diffuse religion. "They who do not love religion," says Mr. Burke, "hate it. The rebels to God perfectly abhor the Author of their being. He never presents himself to their thoughts, but to menace and alarm them. They cannot strike the sun out of heaven; but they are able to raise a smouldering smoke, that obscures him from their own eyes." With these feelings, their opposition to Christianity can hardly be expected to restrain itself, whatever be the subject on which they write. Whether their literary labors are directed to metaphysics, history, or natural philosophy, occasions are dexterously improved, of infusing doubts into the reader, or of diminishing his practical sense of the value of revelation. For this purpose, both the surface and the bowels of the earth have been explored—the very regularity of celestial motion has been adduced to prove it the result of no designing agent; and impious men have endeavored to persuade us, that even in the path of the Zodiac, there is a shining host, ready marshalled to contend with the Almighty.

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If you have any doubts of the effects resulting from talents and science, unconnected with moral sentiments and feelings, consider what has rendered the European continent, for the last twenty years, a scene of misery, revolution, and war. Men of depraved character, possessing that influence, which strong powers, science, and an enterprising, restless temper seldom fail to bestow, diffused over Europe that spirit of atheism and misrule, which has strewed with mighty ruins the fairest part of the globe. The four winds have, indeed, striven on the great deep—and though the tempest is hushed; and the surges are now subsiding, we behold, on a widely extended ocean, the fragments of scattered navies, and many human beings struggling between life and death.

> Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto
> Arma virum, tabulæq ; et Troïa gaza per undas.

The same effects, in a proportionate degree, will be produced wherever the understanding is cultivated, and the fruits of the heart are permitted to shoot up in the wildness of nature. What infidels of uncommon powers have accomplished in the courts of princes, or in the mass of a nation, others of ordinary growth, may achieve in their own vicinity or village.

I have been led to make these remarks, for the sake of placing in a strong light, the importance of combining literary with moral improvement; and from no apprehension that any to whom I speak, are inclined to speculative infidelity. But the standing, which your education will give you in society, will place it in your power to aid the interests of virtue or vice, in other methods, than by either directly defending or opposing the Christian religion. These interests will be affected by the greater or less solemnity, with which you treat the subjects of religion in general—the regard which you manifest for its institutions—the attention, or neglect, with which you treat its professors and advocates—but especially by your sensibility to those moral restraints, which it imposes on human conduct.

There is another point of view, in which the importance of

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uniting religion with your studies will be further apparent. A very elegant and perspicuous inquirer into the philosophy of mind, has mentioned among the advantages derived from the reading of fictitious narratives, "that by exhibitions of characters a little elevated above the common standard, they have a tendency to cultivate the taste in life; to quicken our disgust at what is mean or offensive, and to form the mind insensibly to elegance and dignity." Now if it tends to purify and elevate the mind, to contemplate fictitious representations of human excellence, to how much greater extent, as well as more certainly and constantly, will a similar effect be produced by the habitual contemplation of an ever present and immutable God!—a character, which, to use the language of a living author, "borrows splendor from all that is fair, subordinates to itself all that is great, and sits enthroned on the riches of the universe."*

Nor ought it to escape your notice, that the strongest motives to cultivate both the intellectual and moral powers, are involved in the belief, that we shall exist, and become immortal beyond the grave. If you, who now possess the powers, and execute the functions of intelligent agents, are, by the next fever or the next casualty to be extinguished forever—if there be nothing in you, which the fire cannot consume, nor the worm devour, there is indeed, less excitement to laborious study. For who would take much pains to trim a taper, which shines but for a moment, and can never be lighted again? But, if mind is capable of endless progression in knowledge—endless approximations to the supreme Intelligence—if, in the midst of unremitting success, objects of new interest will forever be presented, what prospects are opened to the view of man! what strong inducements to application and research!

Few scenes of more solemn interest, I think, are ever exhibited on earth, than that which is presented in the last moments of a profligate man, possessing learning and talents. It is an obvious dictate of reason, not less than of revelation, that

* Hall.

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men are accountable for what they have. In these circumstances, his mind recognizes two sources of alarm. It contemplates the things which have been done, and those which have been omitted. In that large sphere, in which minds of this description are designed to move, it finds nothing on which to repose with pleasure. Neither by precept nor example have the duties of morality and the solemnity of religion been enforced. All that influence, which he might have had on the side of order, and virtue, and piety, has received an opposite direction. In the contemplations of those around him, ideas of a lax morality, of talents, and erudition, have been most unhappily associated. Many, who respected him for the latter qualities, have been consoled under the lashes of conscience, and confirmed in vice, by the authority of his example. For the evil done, and the good neglected, he is now required to account before the Eternal!

Young Gentlemen—A very few years will now fix the character, which you are to sustain through life. Those further advanced in age, are often surprised at the rapidity, with which the habits and feelings of the collegian are exchanged for those of the citizen. We witness young men, taking leave of the places of their education, and, if habits of regularity and diligence are formed, we are soon reminded of our own progress in years, by recognising them in the pulpit, at the bar, or on the bench. The blossoms are scarcely fallen, before the fruit is seen swelling into ripeness.

In this address I have had occasion to observe, that the mind is enlarged and elevated by the habitual contemplation of an object, so full of splendor and majesty, as the Supreme Being. But the effect hereby produced, is less important on the intellectual powers, than on the heart. On your moral resemblance to Him depends, not only your usefulness in life, but your security or ruin through all the periods of unmeasured duration.—Towards Him let your views be habitually directed, with reverence, humility, and hope.

To establish an intercourse between heaven and earth, and

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to diffuse over this world, something of that light which encircles the divine majesty: The Word was made flesh and dwelt among men: They beheld his glory, the glory, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. You cannot duly appreciate this religion, even as a system of duties and motives, without contemplating that palpable gloom, which had for ages, enshrouded the world. But I will not on this occasion, repeat remarks, which your course of education has rendered familiar. My object is less to eulogize Christianity, than to leave on your minds a practical sense of the connexion which it has with your peace, your honor, and salvation. In the spirit of this holy religion, and relying on the atonement and intercession of its Author, may you, amidst all the changes of human affairs, but especially at the present interesting moment, prefer to heaven the poet's prayer:

"Father of light and life! Thou Good Supreme!
O teach me what is good! Teach me thyself!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low pursuit! And feed my soul
With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss!"

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1815.

Young Gentlemen,

In all those parts of the universe, which are subject to human remark, we recognise the effects of divine legislation. That there are certain laws, agreeably to which all changes in the material world are effected, is acknowledged by atheists; the inconsistency of admitting laws without a lawgiver notwithstanding. It is no more denied by the infidel, than by the religious philosopher, that similar causes uniformly produce similar results.

If Deity has suffered no particle of matter, however worthless, to exist, uncontrolled by laws, it will hardly be questioned, that intelligent beings have some kind of designation; in other words, that the object of their existence will be answered by their proceeding in a particular course, and frustrated should they pursue the opposite. Gravitation is not more a law to material objects, than virtue is to all beings, who are capable of it.

I know not that the present occasion can be better improved, than by addressing you on the immutable, independent nature of moral obligation; or of that virtue, which results from a compliance with it. "Morality," to use the words of an able writer, "is fixed on an immoveable basis, and appears not to be, in any sense, factitious, or the arbitrary production of any power, human or divine; but equally everlasting and necessary with all truth and reason."

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When it is asserted, that morality is not the production of any power, human or divine, we do not deny, that those persons reason conclusively, as well as reverently, who infer the rectitude of a measure from the fact of its having been adopted by Deity;—because, being previously assured of his moral perfections; that is, of his infinite attachment to the eternal rules of truth, goodness, and justice, we conclude with unwavering confidence, that no particular act of his can violate these rules. In this however, it is by no means implied, that the standard of moral rectitude is factitious, or dependent on the will of any being whatever. The rectitude of actions does not depend on their proceeding from one being or another; but on their coincidence with the immutable principles of virtue. Almost all men think with good reason, that they speak honorably of the Supreme Being, when they say, that all his measures are taken because they are right. Now this language implies that there is, independent of all will, such a thing as right and wrong. If I say of the vernal forest, it is green, or of the sun, it is luminous, I assert nothing, unless I affix some ideas to those epithets.

The immutable principles of morality necessarily result, we believe, from the nature of things, and from the relation, which they have one to another. As God is the author of all things, the relation, subsisting between them, may be considered, as depending on Him. But, while objects continue, in all respects, as they are, no change can be produced in their relations. A figure, which is now a square, may be turned into a circle. But, while it continues a square, it must have the relations of such a figure. Now, it is just as absurd to ascribe to Deity the power of changing vice into virtue, or virtue into vice, as to speak of his giving to a globe, so continuing, the properties and relations of a cube; or to speak of his making a whole, which is less than the sum of all its parts.

So certain is it, that the reality of moral obligation, or the distinction between virtue and vice, is not the creature of power, that were we to make the most absurd of all suppositions, viz. that there is no intelligent Author of the universe, even then a

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distinction between right and wrong, and consequent obligation, would still remain. Without investigating our origin, we are found to be in a situation in which, as we pursue certain courses, we may either contribute much both to the happiness of ourselves and others; or render both ourselves and them sufficiently wretched. Now, were the will of no Supreme Being consulted, nor any future retribution anticipated, I appeal to your understanding, whether it would not be right for a man to live in such a manner, as to render society regular and tranquil, and himself and others happy, rather than to form such dispositions and habits, as would produce misery in his own breast, and diffuse it among those around him? I would ask further, whether such a person, perceiving one course to be right, and another to be wrong, would not be under obligation to adopt the one and avoid the other?—whether this obligation would not be fastened upon him in every connexion, which he might form, and in every stage of life?

Some actions and feelings are intrinsically, or independently of consequences, wrong. Others are in like manner right. No circumstances can make malignity right, nor benevolence wrong. No consequences can render it fit, that two opposite moral characters should, on the whole, be treated alike. No supposed utility can render it right for innocence to be oppressed, or crimes rewarded.

Whatever it is impossible to conceive not to exist, is said to exist necessarily. On this principle we prove, that a distinction in moral actions is necessary, and therefore immutable. For you can no more conceive the annihilation of this distinction, than the non-existence of space or duration. But when, in addition to this abstract view of the subject, we find a Being, in whom moral perfection is actually exhibited;—a Being in whom the principles of virtue are, so to speak, embodied; when this Being bursts upon our astonished sight, not only as a pattern for our imitation, but as a judge to decide on our character and destiny, the moral edifice assumes a new appearance; it exhib-

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its not only solidity and proportion, but splendor and awful sublimity.

Deity acknowledges the eternal distinction between right and wrong, by making it the basis of his own administration. His throne is established in righteousness. He proposes it to all created intelligences, as the criterion, by which their characters are to be estimated, and his own treatment of them to be regulated.

I am not insensible, that the obligations of virtue have by some been resolved into an affair of expedience or utility;—and that whatever is useful, has been pronounced as therefore right.

The nature of virtue is doubtless the same in all beings who possess it. It would follow, then, from the principle just mentioned, that the Almighty, and all creatures, so far as they imitate his moral rectitude, hesitate at no means, by which a result, finally advantageous can be accomplished. It is readily acknowledged, that the greatest happiness of the universe, which can be effected consistently with justice to each individual, and the unchangeable rules of truth and goodness, is a motive to action, than which, so far as we are able to judge, nothing can be more worthy of the Supreme Being. But, that such an object should be pursued independently of these limitations; or, that moral rectitude should have no other basis than general utility, is a position, which surely ought not to be readily adopted. Such principles in morality would introduce universal uncertainty and distrust. No confidence could on this ground be placed in the promise of any being whatever; as any government, whether human or divine would be justified in deceiving, nay, would be morally bound to deceive, when greater utility might be thereby promoted. And beings of enlarged views may see that to be useful, which others do not. Therefore, my not seeing, that a deception practised on me would be useful on the whole, does not prove that it would not, and consequently that it may not happen.

But even were it allowed, that all the moral perfections of

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God are absorbed in his regard to utility, we should still utterly deny, that creatures with powers so limited, and understanding so darkened as ours, would be able from this principle, to infer their duty, or deduce any thing resembling a correct series of moral actions. "Even men of the soundest and most penetrating understanding," says an elegant metaphysician, "might frequently be led to the perpetration of enormities, if they had no other light to guide them, but what they derived from their own uncertain anticipations of futurity. And when we consider how small the number of such men is, in comparison of those, whose judgments are perverted by the prejudices of education, or their own selfish passions, it is easy to see what a scene of anarchy the world would become."

There is, indeed, something palpably absurd in the very thought of our being called upon, many times perhaps in the course of a single day, to decide upon the interests of the universe;—to determine whether it will be most conducive to the happiness of all orders of beings, who now exist, or may exist hereafter, that we should observe our promises or violate them,—that we should indulge our passions or restrain them. Our Creator has not placed us under the necessity of entering into such hopeless calculations. He has rendered us capable of perceiving that fraud, cruelty, oppression, and impiety, are essentially wrong; and that the opposite qualities are, independently of consequences, entitled to the approbation and eager pursuit of all rational beings.

We are not, as has been believed by most pagans, whether ancient or modern, scintillations, struck off from the mass of Infinite Intelligence, hereafter to be reabsorbed, and thus to lose our individual existence. We exist as individuals. And though we sustain, indeed, the most important relation to other beings, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, must still be personal. We can never be identified with the universe, as the falling drops of rain are absorbed in the ocean.

The great principles of rectitude, so deeply inscribed on the human understanding,—so universally acknowledged to be just,

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however practically disregarded,—these great principles I would represent to you as the massy pillars, on which is supported that moral government, to which all intelligent beings owe subjection. "This law," it has been observed, "is not the creature of will, but necessary and immutable; not local or temporary, but of equal extent and antiquity with the divine mind; not dependent on power, but the guide of all power." It is, indeed, that same law, which Jesus Christ came into the world "to magnify and to make honorable."

The worth, young gentlemen, not only of your characters but of your existence, depends on your attention to this law. No possible reverses of condition,—no transitions, whether in the present, or any future state, can render you dishonorable, if you are sincerely attached to it. Nor, while negligent of it, can present affluence, or success, or popularity make you truly respectable, nor long esteemed so. By loving and regarding this, will be formed that virtue of character, which will endure through height and depth. Not like those sickly plants, which can flourish only, while there is nothing to annoy them, it resembles the oak, which braves the tempest on the mountain's top.

Permit me, on this occasion, to impress on your minds, the universality of this law. It is binding on a man because he occupies a conspicuous place in society,—not because he has chosen one profession rather than another,—nor because he has lived in the world sixty years rather than sixteen; it is binding upon him because he is a rational being. It is binding on you, because you are such. Neither can any change in your circumstances exempt you from its obligations. It consents to no compromise. It yields nothing to the selfishness or the passions of men. Do not imagine, therefore, that in consequence of forming new connexions, or of meeting new occurrences, the rules of virtue will be either annihilated or altered. Whatever may be the opinion of others, do not readily acknowledge that as innocent, which you have been in the habit of contemplating, as base or vicious.

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It will now be in your power to make more apparent than heretofore, the side which you take in the great conflict between virtue and vice—between regularity and misrule; and you will, I confidently hope, use whatever influence you may acquire, not only to suppress the grosser vices, but to honor and support religious institutions, and to render effectual every ordinance of man, which has for its object to give permanence, ornament, and perfection to the social state. That you may be stimulated to attach yourselves to the side of order, good morals, and piety, contemplate the nature of vice. "It is," says an author already referred to, "the only real object of censure and blame, and the source of all evils. Other evils, such as diseases, poverty, losses, and calumny, affect only what is external; but they need not disturb our minds, or do the least injury to what is truly ourselves. But vice pierces, and wounds, and lays waste ourselves. It hurts not merely the body, the reputation, or the fortune, but the man; and plants anguish, uproar, and death in the soul itself. Other evils may, in the end, prove benefits to us, but this is eternally, and unchangeably evil; the bane of every heart, into which it enters; the ruin of all, who do not in time rescue themselves from its dominion; and the sting and misery in whatever else afflicts us.

"It is impossible to conceive what it is to set up our own wills against reason and the divine will—to violate the order of the world, and depart from that law which governs all things, and by which the Deity acts. There is no object in nature so monstrous, as a reasonable being defiled with guilt, living in contradiction to the remonstrances of his understanding, trampling on the authority of God, and opposing himself to the obligations of truth and righteousness."

To repress this disorder, to reclaim the guilty wanderings of men, to reconcile them to the principles of eternal justice, and to unite in one vast community all virtuous beings, whether of human or angelic nature, is the great object of the Christian religion: It hath pleased the Father, that in Christ all fulness should dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself,

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whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. Unite your interests to those of this honorable and vast fraternity. Unless you possess the spirit of Christianity, that principle of moral life, by which this community is animated, you are this day, going unshielded into a world which is unfriendly to virtue. Without the spirit of Christianity, you are now embarking on the ocean of life, without a line, or chart, or compass—an ocean where you are liable to be allured by Sirens, or agitated by boisterous winds. But possessing this, you shall pass in safety the enchanted shores, and survive every storm, cheered and directed by the star of Bethlehem.

Of the class, which, three years ago, I addressed, on an occasion similar to the present, part of whom participate the honors and exercises of this day, two,* alas, will return no more. The fresh earth on their graves has now been moistened by the tears of friendship. Nothing remains for me, but to suggest to you that rational and pious use, to which events of this nature ought to be improved. Let me not be accused of throwing a gloom on the cheerful aspect of this day, by reminding you that you are mortal. This is forced upon your recollection, less by any remarks of mine, than be the Providence of God, and by the anniversary itself. We wish you, indeed, if such be your Creator's good pleasure, many years of joyous prosperity. But even one is more than we can promise you; so is a month, when we reflect, that of those who immediately preceded you, one† almost literally descended from this stage to the grave! Whatever claims religion has upon you, they are imperious, and demand to be immediately satisfied.

> "To man's false optics, (from his folly, false,)
> Time, in advance, behind him hides his wings,
> And seems to creep, decrepit with his age;
> Behold him, when pass'd by! What then is seen,
> But his broad pinions, swifter than the winds?
> And all mankind, in contradiction strong,
> Rueful, aghast, cry out on his career."

* George Freeman and William Pilsbury.

† James Cargill.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1816.

Young Gentlemen,

In these remarks, which are doubtless the last in which it will ever be in my power to address you, I should hardly be excused, were my object any other, than your improvement, either moral or intellectual. Human powers are given first to be cultivated, and then to be used for the great purpose of individual and public happiness. In pursuing the former of these objects, you have already made some advancement; while the latter has scarcely yet been presented to you in its full dimensions. In regard to both, it is important to possess a knowledge of the human mind—an acquaintance with intellectual philosophy. To operate successfully on matter, the qualities of matter must be known. For a similar reason, if we are endeavoring to strengthen, polish, and direct the mind, in relation either to ourselves or others, it is necessary to be acquainted with its nature and powers, and with the manner in which application is to be made to it, in order to effect the change or improvement desired.

No man studies, or adopts a course of intellectual discipline with so much certainty of advantage, as he who knows most of mind in general, and the particular structure of his own.

But my object, at present, is not so much to illustrate and enforce this idea, as to show the value of intellectual philosophy to persons in public life. By public life, I mean the condition

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of every man who has extensive influence on the morals or opinions, the pursuits or happiness, of many around him. This influence, which one person has over the character and situation of others, is chiefly effected through the medium of mind; it is an influence on their partialities, their aversions, their determinations and habits. If, therefore, men would effect much good in society, they must be well acquainted with this medium. So far is it from being true, either that researches of this kind are fitted only for the recluse; or that the philosophy of mind is unconnected with the business and purposes of life.

There is no well informed person, I believe, who is not convinced that much is done in youth, towards forming a permanent character in subsequent years. The direction, which the mind early receives, may be either auspicious or unfortunate, as it respects future intellectual progress. The impressions communicated, and the associations of ideas which are formed, will have no less influence, either to improve or corrupt the moral character. A knowledge of the human mind is, therefore, of primary importance in all who guide the literary inquiries of youth, or who superintend their early impressions and moral principles.

As to intellectual progress there are certain truths, which the mind more readily receives, than others; and, by the aid of which these others are more easily comprehended and retained. A knowledge of the human mind will show what truths belong to each of these classes; and what relations different propositions, and different sciences have to each other. That the order, in which truths are presented to the mind, is of material importance, will appear, if we consider the impossibility of reading sentences, without a previous knowledge of words, syllables, and letters—or of understanding the higher branches of mathematics, for him who has not been taught the elements of geometry. The arrangement of propositions in Euclid, you well know, is not a matter of casualty. Those which precede, are the necessary steps to others, in advance.

The same method of proceeding, is requisite in teaching, not

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only every branch of natural science, but the principle of ethics, and the doctrines of Christianity. All these are addressed to our reason. They are to be received on evidence. And those propositions, on each of these subjects, ought first to be taught, which will most facilitate the introduction of others.

But further, it is necessary that truth be so presented, as not only to be readily understood, but in such manner if possible as to excite no prejudice. Therefore, it ought not to be exhibited in connexion with anything low, extravagant, and disgusting—nor even, if it may be avoided, with any other truth, against which strong prejudices are known to exist. Agreeably to this, it is asserted by an author, well known to you, "to be one of the most essential objects of education, by watching over the impressions which the mind receives in early life, to secure it against the influence of prevailing errors; and, as far as possible, to engage its prepossessions on the side of truth." Now, the accomplishment of this object may be expected just in proportion as the human mind is analyzed, and its different powers, especially its principle of association, distinctly known.

Besides, religion, or what is strictly speaking denominated moral character, is by no means, made up of intellectual assent to certain propositions. A man can no more be religious, than he can be amiable, obliging, or compassionate, merely by the force of his understanding. Religion requires, that the will, the affections, and imagination should habitually obey the dictates of this presiding power. A knowledge of these faculties is, therefore, necessary not less for the moral or the religious instructor, than for those who excite to literary research, or direct the scientific inquiries of youth.

According to the definition I have given, few descriptions of men can be said to act in a capacity more public, than legislators—those who form the constitution, or the subsequent laws of a State. By these will be affected, in a greater or less degree, the safety, property, and morals of all the individuals in a community. Some forms of government, and some political institutions are better for securing happiness, peace, and virtue, than

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others. Now, it is obvious, that all forms of government and civil establishments are intended to operate upon mind—to influence and control the conduct of intelligent agents. It is necessary, therefore, that they who frame them, should be acquainted with the principles of mind. In forming civil establishments, a knowledge of intellectual philosophy is the more necessary, as there is a defect in experience. The natural philosopher, taught by a series of well conducted experiments, may be perfectly confident, what will be the result of certain compositions. But, if his experiments have been heedlessly made—or if he is doubtful whether his present ingredients are the same, or mixed in the same proportions, as on former occasions, the result will be wholly uncertain. This kind of uncertainty will attend every experiment, in the result of which, human choice is implied, and will be increased in proportion to the number of minds, on which such result is depending. Now, no two nations were ever found, in character and circumstances perfectly alike. And, therefore, though experience must be of vast importance to the statesman, there is always uncertainty in arguing from the condition of one nation to that of another. Hence a knowledge of intellectual philosophy is necessary to enable him to estimate the difference, as to result, which will be produced by this difference of circumstances.

There are other views of the subject, which will lead to the same opinion, as to the connexion between legislation and a knowledge of the human mind. It is the object of every enlightened statesman, to make it the interest of each to pursue that course, which will advance the public interest. Now, as punishment is an evil, designed to counterbalance the supposed advantage of doing wrong, the idea of punishment ought to be intimately connected with that of crime. And the more clearly this connexion is seen, the less frequently will occur either crimes or punishments.

That civil establishments should be adapted to the nature of man, is necessary alike to their utility and duration. When a government is built on ignorance, prejudice, or the interest of a

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few, as soon as the people are enlightened, there will be a revolution. But if accommodated to the nature and powers of man, and founded on the broad principle of justice, it will be the more stable, as light increases.

Nearly the same observations will apply to all benevolent and moral institutions. As these are intended to operate upon mind, they must have their foundation in a knowledge of its principles. Besides, to the character of an able statesman, it is obvious, that the power both of speaking and writing is necessary. This power implies not only the possession of a cultivated mind, but knowledge of mind in general.

The same knowledge is requisite to a right estimate of evidence, whether exhibited before deliberative assemblies, or used in judiciary trials; whether relating to historical facts, or the common intercourse of life.

In fine, the possession of intellectual powers, is that, by which men are chiefly distinguished from brute animals; and to the cultivation of these powers we owe the whole difference between the savage and civilized state. From mind originates advancement in knowledge, improvement in arts, the blessings of government, and all national changes, whether for the better or worse. It is, indeed, the vast machine by which the greatest events of the universe are brought into existence. If so, it ought to be well understood, that its powers may receive a suitable direction.

Nor should it be forgotten, that for prosecuting studies of this kind, all men have peculiar facilities. To acquire knowledge in various branches of natural science, expensive preparations are requisite. They can be pursued only at particular places, or at certain seasons. For the study of mind, you need not, like the astronomer, erect an observatory; nor, with the chemist, repair to the furnace, or provide retorts, and tests, and solvents; nor with the botanist, need you collect the vegetation of every climate. The whole apparatus and subject of examination are contained within yourselves. The process is forever going on.

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Wherever there is thought and volition, there is interesting matter for intellectual research.

You may ask in this place, whether, by becoming well versed in the philosophy of mind, a person does not acquire a dangerous power—and whether, if Fenelon, Pascal, Bacon, Locke, Addison and Burke employed their powers, whether of reasoning or eloquence, with intention to enlighten and amend their species, others may not, through the same medium, assail the morals, and corrupt the heart. Unquestionably they may. And so may strength and soundness of body be employed for purposes of violence and terror. Still neither impotence nor diseases are objects of desire.

An enlarged acquaintance with human powers, or even the possession of them, is dangerous, when directed by no moral principle. Without this, it were better to be any thing than a rational being. Your intellectual powers, let me remind you, will survive the most durable objects of the material universe. They will not, like these, wax old, or be impaired by time; nay, the revolutions of eternity will but add to their vigor and comprehension.

There will be a clearness of perception, corresponding with their enlargement. Your relation to God, the nature of human obligation, and the difference between virtue and vice, will be subjects neither of investigation nor cavil. The friends of virtue will then experience that peace and overflowing joy, which arise from an intimate and near view of its obligation and good desert, and of the unchangeable approbation of its Author. The conflict, on the other side, which is now maintained in vicious men, between reason and inclination, will then become intolerable; when reason shall have acquired immortal strength, and vice unchangeable dominion.

There are two courses, young gentlemen, both as it respects intellectual and moral attainments, now presented to your choice; and in regard to which, I pray God you may feel no hesitation.

As to the powers of intellect, by neglecting them, or by en-

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gaging in pursuits in which they have little exercise, you may, and that, perhaps, with more rapidity than you imagine, erase from the memory whatever valuable impression it has received, during that course of education, which is now at a close. You may, on the other hand, consider your present acquirements, only as an encouraging commencement of a studious life. "I have always believed," says the author of letters attributed to Ganganelli, "that the honor of possessing an immortal soul, was the greatest possible glory." If you view the matter in the same light, and consider mind, as an invaluable deposite, for the preservation and use of which you are accountable—if, with systematical assiduity you make it more rich, and solid, and brilliant, at the end of every year, than it was at the beginning—if you form an increasing attachment to books and to literary men, the time may arrive, and certainly will arrive, if life be prolonged, when you will look back on your present acquisitions, as you now reflect on the first elements of education.

As to moral attainments, the two courses are equally different. I consider, that this day, there is formed a crisis in your life and character. From this time you may pervert every acquirement and every talent, using both to propagate error, and to bear down truth, order, and correct manners. Or, on the contrary, you may now resolve to use whatever powers you have, or whatever influence you may acquire, to discountenance ignorant delusion, false principles, profligate habits, and impiety; to promote good learning, and whatever tends to the stability and improvement of society, or to secure the immortal interests of man. But on the present occasion, let me urge you to look, not exclusively either to respectability of character, or services, which society may claim from you. If mind is imperishable, you have a personal interest at stake, of greater value, than the limited happiness of communities or nations. Christianity opens to you a boundless prospect. It coincides with enlightened, unbiassed reason, both as to its commands and prohibitions. In this religion, you will find a friend most constant and powerful,

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or an enemy, bold, active, and unrelenting. It neither professes, nor tolerates neutrality. It now offers you its clear light and its rich consolations. May your improvement of the one, ensure to you the unlimited possession of the other.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1817.

Young Gentlemen,

SHOULD the present address contain little more, than remarks which have been frequently made to you, during the time of your connexion with college, I may still, perhaps, be permitted to hope that the occasion will impart to them a peculiar interest. Instead of giving you a system of rules and counsels, which, did the time permit, might seem not unsuitable to the present crisis, I shall limit myself to a very few particulars, relative to intellectual improvement, social intercourse, and your duties as citizens and Christians.

Without denying what the analogy of nature abundantly suggests; viz. that powers of mind are unequally bestowed on men, it is important to observe, that the principal difference in the success of those, who engage in pursuit of knowledge, may be traced to that diversity in which they possess the powers of attention and perseverance.

Men of ordinary minds, when their attention is strongly attracted to a particular object, are known to acquire knowledge with a rapidity, of which they were previously thought incapable. If a man is called to defend a favorite opinion in theology, morality, or politics, he frequently displays unexpected acumen, address, and dexterity. The reason is obvious. His feelings are aroused. Far from finding it laborious to fix his

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thoughts on the subject, he perceives, that they fly to it, as if by enchantment. Its shape, so to speak, its constituent parts, its various relations are all minutely discerned. Let the mind be as securely fastened to any other subject, and similar will be the result. An accurate knowledge of it will be rapidly acquired. Nor is such a command of our thoughts less necessary to the retaining, than to the acquisition of knowledge.

That the power of attention is not exclusively the gift of nature, appears by the case now supposed. In this instance it is the result of casualty. But a power so important, must not be submitted to the caprices of such a guide. To every person, who is either cultivating his mind, or using it for the advantage of others, it becomes a great desideratum to have his thoughts at his own command; that is, subject to his own choice and direction.

If a young man at the time of leaving the place of his education, has acquired, not only a thirst for knowledge, but a good command of his attention—an ability to fix his thoughts on whatever subject it becomes his duty to investigate; this one acquisition is perhaps of greater value, than all the ideas which have been communicated to him on subjects of literature and science. For, he who possesses the former, will not long remain destitute of the latter; being prepared to engage, with entire confidence of success, in any literary or scientific pursuit.

On the contrary, when a person has formed habits of inattention—when his thoughts cease to be under the control of his will, and his chief labor is, not to investigate the subject in hand, but to keep his thoughts from deserting it—not to charge home on the enemy, but to prevent his recreant troops from flying—no success can be anticipated—no victories can be won.

Whenever the power of commanding the mind is thus lost, the train of its ideas lies at the mercy of casual circumstances; and even the active part of life differs in nothing from a waking dream. This state of mental disorder—this intellectual desolation is a present judgment of Almighty God, on such as neglect or abuse those rational powers, which he has graciously be-

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stowed. I am perfectly convinced, young gentlemen, that this language is scarcely sufficient to represent the detriment which you must experience, should you, by the ill management of your minds, suffer them to escape from your control.

Should it be asked, how this power of attention is to be acquired, I answer, that some portion of it belongs to the human constitution. Every person who begins a course of study, is able, in a greater or less degree, to regulate his own thoughts. The power is, therefore, not to be created, but to be strengthened and cherished. And this is to be done by use and exercise. All powers, whether of body or mind, are, in this way, brought to their highest state of improvement. The studies, which most exercise the powers of attention, are, doubtless, peculiarly calculated to invigorate those powers. Mathematics and metaphysics have, in this view, distinguished claims. Progress in either of these sciences so obviously depends on attention, that ignorance of them is known to be the doom of every student, who will not be at pains to confine his thoughts.

But though these studies are well calculated to procure for young men the command of their thoughts, they are not indispensable to that end. Any study, any occupation, or labor, which serves to fix the thoughts, serves to increase the power of commanding them.

The study of language, is, in this respect, entitled to distinct notice. When it is considered, that words are signs of things invisible, that is, of ideas—that of the vast variety of emotions and thoughts which occur in the human mind, the greater part may be so expressed by words as to become intelligible to others—when it is further considered, that a comparison of different languages, serves to prove, that in different ages, and distant nations, similar divisions and classifications have been made in the objects of human thought; and that a resemblance has been imagined between corporeal and mental operations, insomuch, that the language of matter has become, in many instances, the language of mind—when it is further observed, that not only the progress of mind, but the form of civil government, the state of

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the arts and civilization, in any country or period, may be ascertained with considerable accuracy, by the structure, poverty, or copiousness of its language—when all this is perceived, it will not seem easy to overrate the science of philology, or to think too highly of its influence in disciplining the mental powers.

Next to attention, I would recommend persevering industry. It will be pardoned, perhaps, if I suggest a doubt, whether the highest degree of application, of which the mind is capable, without endangering health, has ever been ascertained by experiment, even at our best public seminaries. I am led to entertain this doubt, by reflecting on the intense study, to which many divines and scholars have submitted through the greater part of a long life; and from being, on the best authority, informed that there is now practised in some of the universities on the European continent, a degree of industry, which to us seems almost incredible.

It cannot easily be imagined, that there is any thing in the climate of America, more than in that of England or Germany, which renders study unfavorable to health or longevity.

Should I be told of instances, in which, not only health, but life, has been prematurely sacrificed by studious men; I answer, that these instances, allowing the largest calculation, are exceedingly few. And of these few, it is believed, that a very small proportion are the necessary effect of study. The rest are produced by the want of that attention to exercise and regimen, which is perfectly consistent with habits of assiduous application.

Instead of reiterating those exhortations to industry, which may have become familiar to you, I will take the liberty of using the words of Lord Minto, in which, a few years since, he addressed a class at Fort William College, that, like you, were leaving the place of their education. "Ply your labors, and distrust every other means of success. Above all, beware of a treacherous confidence in the advantage of a supposed superiority of talents. These, unsupported by industry, will drop you midway; or perhaps you will not have started, when the diligent traveller will have won the race. Be assured, that in

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study, application is the first, the second, and the third virtue; application, not *per saltum*, not in capricious fits, not with ebbs and flows of indolence and exertion. Ardent indeed it must be; but uniform and unabating. Those among the Grecian youth, who aspired at Olympic crowns, would by no means trust their hopes to the flattering gifts of nature, however lavishly endowed; but sought to fix their fortune, and secure their laurels, by long and vigorous preparations for the contest."

It is not to be imagined, however, that industry is valuable only in relation to literary and scientific pursuits. Though I hope you will always be students, you are not to be students exclusively. Active duties there are, which, on your peril, you must not neglect. In reference to these, as well as others, assiduity is indispensable: Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.

That attention and perseverance, of which I have been speaking, will doubtless produce the most favorable effects, on your powers of judging, and on your decisions. By cultivating the judgment, and deciding deliberately, you obtain two important advantages. Decisions, thus formed, will usually be found correct; they will, therefore, be respected, both by others and yourselves. In point of judgment, men are very likely to be estimated according to real value. His opinions, who is usually found to be in the right, will seldom be disregarded. He will, therefore, have a degree of influence in society, to which a person of feeble judgment or hasty decisions can have no claim. In addition to this, he will himself have good confidence in those intellectual results, to which he arrives. No person should, indeed, reject good counsel, nor treat contemptuously the opinions of other men. But he who cannot, in the event, be safely guided by his own judgment, will be in perpetual apprehension and doubt. He will always be in danger from the weakness or dishonesty of men. He ought, therefore, to contract the sphere of his action, and thus diminish his responsibility.

Never aspire at places or employments, disproportionate to your powers. Let it be rather your ambition to discharge, with

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ability, promptness, and fidelity, the duties of that station in which you are. This, of itself, will enable others to judge, whether a more elevated office might, with safety and advantage be placed in your hands. Be assured, that a restless desire of elevation and aggrandizement, is as little consistent with happiness, as it is with duty.

As to fair reputation, it is for various reasons to be carefully cherished. No person of correct feelings ever was, or ever can be indifferent to it. In itself desirable, it is that, without which no considerable good can be effected either for your friends or the public. High character for talents is not, indeed, within the reach of all men. But what is far better, I mean reputation for moral virtue, may alike be obtained by men of superior and ordinary powers. This honest report is that good name, which Solomon declares to be better than precious ointment. But though you should assiduously cherish a fair character, be not greatly alarmed at malevolent slander. Reputation for correct morals, if fairly gained and well supported, cannot in a moment be withered. There is a hardiness and vigor attached to it. If it bends for a short time before the blast, it will soon resume its former erect attitude, insensibly extending both its roots and its branches.

Let your manners be of such a kind, as to conciliate esteem. A person is never innocent in giving offence, when, without any sacrifice of duty, truth, or propriety, it might have been avoided. Conscious that an action is good, persons are sometimes regardless of the manner of performing it, and as to the impression which it is likely to make on the minds of others. As if it were possible for a man to be sincerely desirous of doing good, and at the same moment indifferent whether good or evil should result from his actions!

The urbanity and caution, now mentioned, are perfectly consistent with decision of character. Were it otherwise, they could never be matter of commendation. For who would not prefer the oak with all its roughness, to the willow, from which nothing can safely depend?

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If in your intercourse with men you receive injurious treatment, prudence, as well as the principles of Christianity, requires that you neither overrate the injury, nor return it with severity.—While you are viewed as a sufferer, others will take an interest in your favor. But, if you take ample revenge, exaggerate, or blazon the offence which you have received, the public will feel little compassion, but will suffer yourself and your adversary to settle the affair at your leisure.

Whatever profession you may respectively pursue, you will not cease to be members of the State. As such you are bound to feel for the public prosperity, and to cherish an ardent affection for that free constitution, under which we have the happiness to live. The difference between a free and an absolute government, does not consist in this, that there is more restraint in the one, than in the other; but in this rather, that, in the latter case, restraint is created by fear and physical force—in the former, by reason and enlightened morality. In proportion, therefore, as you aid the interests of sound learning, virtue, and piety, you strengthen the only foundation, on which a republic can be supported.

But, young gentlemen, you are not only members of civil society, but of a Christian nation. Something, therefore, you well know, is at hazard, more valuable than your own temporal interest, or even than that of the community. Whether you are sedate or volatile, pious or profane, one fact is well established—a revelation has been made from the immutable God; a revelation, which, under the sanction of eternal consequences, requires every man to be a Christian, and every Christian more nearly to resemble his Master: Because God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. This revelation with all its features, whether of mildness or severity, I do most affectionately entreat you to receive, revere, and obey; in the full persuasion, that he was divinely inspired, who said: I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.

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Among the fascinating scenes of this day, it has not, I hope, escaped your recollection, that one* of those, who took part in the exercises of the last commencement, survived that occasion but a few months. The fatal disorder, it now appears, had, at that time, without exciting alarm, commenced the attack, which ended in victory. A conquest of the same kind must, when God pleases, be obtained over us. Remember that nothing in life is so interesting, or certain, as the close of it. Let your anticipations and purposes be of great extent and comprehension. Let them reach to all the successions of eternity. Let them embrace all that is glorious in the Christian salvation.

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* Dudley Norris.

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ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT IN 1818.

Young Gentlemen,

As power and obligation are correlative terms, to know the measure of our duty, it is requisite to examine our abilities, and the extent, to which they may be brought into beneficent action. Our obligations are commensurate, not merely with our powers, (whether physical or intellectual); but with these in connexion with opportunities of exerting them for the promotion of virtue and human enjoyment.

It will not, therefore, be foreign to the present occasion, to contemplate the influence, which persons, liberally educated, have in society; and the importance, which is by consequence attached to their characters.

A large portion of those, who receive a collegial education, enter on what are denominated the learned professions. To estimate their importance in society, it is, therefore, necessary to consider the nature and influence of these professions, together with the proportion and standing of those, who, in each of them, were previously instructed in some of our public seminaries.

I well know, that there are those, to whom a college catalogue gives their only distinction. There are others too, and those in no inconsiderable number, who, by a vigor of intellect, which no circumstances can repress, and an ardor of application, which no difficulties can discourage, make ample amends for

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the want of literary advantages in early life, and justly claim the notice, confidence, and gratitude of the public.

This obvious fact notwithstanding, it is still true, that the influence, exerted in the community, by those, whose intellectual habits were first formed in our public institutions, has an intimate connexion with individual happiness and national character.

We begin with counsellors at law.—In the large number of those, who, from the first settlement of New England, have arrived at eminence in this profession, imagine the non-existence of all, whose youth was consecrated to literature, and who were prepared by public education for professional studies; there will doubtless still remain characters of much distinction and great merit. But, who does not perceive the chasm of hideous extent, implied in the supposition, which has now been made?

In all the momentous discussions concerning the principles of government, and the establishment of civil constitutions, which the state of political science, and the condition of our infant country, have rendered numerous;—in questions, relative to the greatest degree of freedom, compatible with established authority; or the least individual restraint, that is consistent with public security;—in legislative assemblies, where boundaries, provisions and exceptions, are necessarily attached to every act of legislation;—but especially, in expounding the law, and administering public justice; in maintaining the dignity of civil tribunals, and securing confidence to their decisions:—in all these respects, how extensive and salutary has been the influence of the legal profession, and of that class of professional men to which we allude.

But these subjects, you perceive, comprehend all that is implied in the civil state. They relate to life, property, and morals; to every thing, indeed, for which man consents to relinquish the freedom of nature. There is no family, however obscure,—there is no member of the community, whose happiness and safety are not dependent on the constitution, under which he lives,—the statutes, that are enacted, and the impartiality and promptness, with which justice is administered.

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Our dependence on the medical profession is too obvious and too sensibly felt, to require proof. While frailty, disease, and death, remain, the assiduous and well informed physician can never cease to occupy a conspicuous place in public estimation. The proportion of those, who have not accomplished the prescribed course of college studies, is, perhaps, somewhat greater in this profession, than in either of the other two.

But, if the number of physicians publicly educated were small, such has not been their influence in the medical fraternity:—such has not been their usefulness to the public. They have been among the first to project and organize medical establishments;—to check empiricism and unprincipled temerity,—to encourage laborious study;—to bring into repute that candid, open, and philosophical practice, and that readiness to admit into the healing art the happy discoveries of modern science, which have raised the medical profession to its present high degree of respectability.

Reckoning from the earliest periods in our history, the preachers of religion have, with few exceptions, been educated at public institutions. This has resulted from the learning, judgment, and piety, for which so many among the venerated fathers of New England, whether of the clergy or laity, rendered themselves distinguished. The establishment of Harvard College, at so early a period; when the country in general was a vast wilderness; when wealth was almost unknown; when dangers were forever impending; and the tenure of life peculiarly frail; evinces a generosity of spirit, intellectual comprehension, enlargement of views, and boldness of design, which their descendants should never contemplate, without gratitude and admiration. Their object was to have a State, free, virtuous, enlightened, and well governed;—a church, exemplary and evangelical:—a ministry, learned, pious, and venerable.

For many reasons, the influence of a Christian teacher depends much, under God, on the soundness of his mind and the solidity of his knowledge. It will readily be perceived, that he cannot, without great disadvantage, be unacquainted with sub-

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jects intimately connected with his profession. But the subjects, connected with the clerical profession, are numerous and of great extent.

The duty of man, it has been already observed, is commensurate with his powers. These powers should, therefore, be well understood by those, who would urge him to duty, by displaying his obligations.

The divine law is to be vindicated; and offenders are to be shown, that the virtue, which their Creator demands, is precisely that, which corresponds with their rational nature, and is what enlightened reason condemns them for not possessing.

As Christian teachers are set for the defence of the gospel, it is required of them clearly and forcibly to exhibit the evidences of Christianity; to remove objections, which may be urged against it, and to defend not only its precepts, but its principles and declarations. Whether we consider the antiquity of the sacred Scriptures,—the time, at which they were written,—the customs long disused, to which they refer,—the period, which elapsed from the age of Moses to that of Christ,—and the numerous changes, which the world underwent during that period;—whether we consider the peculiarites of the nation, from which they originated, and whose fortunes they describe,—their style and manner, influenced by a thousand circumstances, which no longer exist;—or whether we consider, that the languages, in which they were written, have for many ages fallen into disuse;—we might rationally conclude, that something more than an ordinary education would be requisite, rightly to understand and judiciously to apply them.

But it will be more directly to our purpose, to fix our attention, for a moment, on the influence, which well informed teachers of religion have had on the literary and moral state of the community. They have been the hearty and uniform friends of learning, and of all institutions which have for their object either the enlargement of the mind or the melioration of moral habits. They have been extensively active in the encouragement of common schools, by which some portion of knowledge has

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been conveyed into every family, whether enjoying wealth, or suffering poverty. They have never viewed, but with honest attachment, and warm interest, the establishment of seminaries of a more public nature, and designed to cherish a mental discipline more liberal and comprehensive.

By displaying the sanctions of religion, and enforcing its duties, they have brought God and a retribution to remembrance;—kept alive, and rendered active the moral sense; imposed restraints on human passions; and thus contributed to the interests of virtue and public order.

In no country on earth, is the action of that vast machine called civil society, maintained without enormous waste of moral principle. Integrity, truth, benevolence, and justice, are worn away by the revolutions, which are kept up through its various parts. In what manner, do you imagine, that this waste is to be repaired? Whence is that stock of virtue to be supplied, which is absolutely necessary to a prosperous state either of civil government or social intercourse? It is from the precepts, the discoveries, and sanctions of religion. It is from Christian instruction, early and incessantly applied to the public mind; by which conscience is rendered more alive, more active, and more imperious. This, even though the statesman be ignorant of it, is the celestial dew, that nourishes the vine and fig-tree, by which he is shaded. He, who brings home to the bosoms of those around him a livelier belief in religion, a more sensible conviction of the unchangeable difference between virtue and vice, together with their appropriate consequences, is a benefactor to the government, under which he lives, to every corporation, to every profession, and to every member of the State. Had piety formed no part of the character of our ancestors;—had there been no religious instructors, or, (what is worse,) had such instructors been hostile to knowledge, and generally indifferent to the duties of their profession, I ask, whether our nation would have been what it now is? Whether there would have been the same stability in government, or the same security to the people; and whether, in that case, there would not have been wanting the strongest ties, by which society can be bound together?

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Now, by bringing into one view the three learned professions, together with the proportion and standing of those, who, in each of them, were previously nurtured in some of our collegial institutions, it will be easy to estimate, in general, the influence, which gentlemen publicly educated, have in society, and the importance, which is consequently attached to their characters.

Should you find, in this representation, any thing to excite your vanity, it will, I hope, be effectually allayed by a rational view of your dangers and obligations. As you are now coming forward to take some part in life, and to produce some degree of effect on the condition and character of men, the sphere of duty will be enlarged, and your defects and errors, and vices, will be rendered the more public, and the more reprehensible.

From the remarks, which have been made, as to the effects, which colleges have on public manners and public happiness, you cannot doubt, that every enlightened friend to his country is a friend to them. But on you, in common with all, who in youth have enjoyed similar advantages, they have peculiar claims. It would be no unsuitable way of satisfying these claims, should you manifest a settled and uniform attachment to literature, and habitual industry in the pursuit of it. It will follow of course, that by conversation and effort, so far as your influence may extend, you give aid to all well directed endeavors to improve science, diffuse a literary taste, and to render our systems of public instruction more comprehensive and more perfect. But, especially, let your deportment be such as to do honor to the collegiate character. Make it evident, that you have not obtained knowledge at the expense of correct principles and sober habits; and thus allay the fears of virtuous parents, lest the atmosphere of a public seminary should communicate to their sons a moral contagion.

I have said that your character as scholars, requires you to cultivate and encourage a correct literary taste. There may be a more intimate connexion between this, and your influence on the morals and piety of those around you, than is at first apprehended. Every effort to promote religion, as well as all other purposes of benevolence, receives material detriment, when

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connected with what is gross, absurd, or extravagant. The style and manner, in which these purposes are proposed and urged, are, by no means, immaterial to their success. As the present in an era of great events, it is likewise an era of strong feelings. These naturally impel to corresponding expressions. Hence may arise a style, wild and inflated; a manner of speaking and writing, which must ever be offensive to a correct scholar, and to every man of nice discernment. Hence, too, may arise a morbid sensibility, that is never satisfied with the modesty, purity, and simplicity of nature.

The great design of every person on earth should be to do good. This is the object of God himself; and it is this, which renders his character lovely in the estimation of good beings. But as he always pursues this end, in a way of righteousness and wisdom, he requires us to be no less conscientious in the means used, than in the purpose to be accomplished. That good, which cannot be attained, without the violation of justice or charity, however it may, through the vapors which surround our intellectual vision, swell upon the sight, is not to be the object either of effort or desire: God does not require us to commit crimes, in order to facilitate the operations of his providence. That the ark might be preserved from falling, it was not necessary, that Uzziah should commit sacrilege.

The field of legitimate benevolence was never more extensive, nor more inviting, than it is at present. Never was there a period, which afforded a fairer opportunity for exerting a beneficent influence. In that comprehensive system of charitable effort, by which the present day is so honorably distinguished; there is some place, in which every person may operate to advantage, some spring, which he may set at liberty,—some wheel, which he may put in motion. If he cannot endow a hospital, or institute a professorship; he may, at least, instruct some child, ignorant, vicious, and forlorn, in the first rudiments of knowledge, and the first principles of duty.

When I consider the harmony, which prevails, and gains strength in our own beloved country,—the pacific aspect of

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Europe, and that impulse of munificence, compassion, and piety, which seems to have been simultaneously felt in every part of Christendom, and the essential tendency, which a knowledge of the Scriptures has to establish "peace on earth and good will towards men;" it is impossible not to cherish a confident hope, that a change for the better is soon to be effected in the character and condition of man. To a mind, that is gladdened by these prospects, the sun seems to shine with a more benignant and uniform radiance,—the clouds seem skirted with colors of uncommon richness and beauty,—a deeper green rests on the face of nature; and all the powers of life are exhilarated, as its blessings are multiplied: Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree. The mountains and hills shall break forth into singing; and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

But whether our anticipations are too sanguine or not, your duties, young gentlemen, are not doubtful. According to the sphere, in which your are placed, and the abilities bestowed on you, you are debtors to every man, whose knowledge, moral feelings, or happiness, may be influenced by your endeavors. These obligations you will feel with peculiar sensibility, if conscious, that during your collegiate life, you have received impressions, more valuable than those, which are made on the intellect, and have enjoyed consolations more rich than those, imparted even by the acquisition of knowledge.

But let your expectations of enjoyment, and your purposes of usefulness be formed with distinct reference to human frailty. Reminded, as I have been, that the loveliest flowers may blossom but for the grave;* admonished, as you are, by the gradual decays of a fellow pupil,† whom disease prevents from participating the exercises of this day, we should both be criminal, did we forget, that every earthly hope may be blasted, and every

* The President's youngest son, an interesting child aged two years, died Oct. 19, 1817.

† Isaac P. Anderson here alluded to, died Dec. 16, 1818.

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human purpose may be rendered vain, by the uncontrollable decrees of infinite, but unsearchable wisdom.

Young Gentlemen,—I can add nothing, but to assure you, that in departing from this seminary, you carry with you, in no ordinary degree, our confidence and our affection.

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A DISSERTATION

ON THE QUESTION

"WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD USE OF A WORD IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE?"*

As the assignment of this subject to me, resulted from the circumstance of my having expressed doubts concerning it, lit-

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* This Dissertation was prepared for the convention of Colleges, and was read by a friend at the convention held May 31, 1820, after the death of the author. For a brief notice of this convention the reader is referred to the memoir prefixed to the first volume.

The fondness of President Appleton for philological inquiries is alluded to in the memoir of his life and character. The interest felt by him in the subject of this Dissertation appears to have arisen several years before it was written. The following letter addressed to the late learned and deeply lamented Benjamin Vaughan Esq. of Hallowell, on the same subject, will not be without interest in this connexion.

Brunswick, May 12, 1809.

Sir,—I would request the favor of your opinion as to the rule which ought to be adopted in the use of English words. It is evident, that the language is perpetually fluctuating. Some terms, used a century and a half ago by the best writers, would not now be used by writers of the same description. It seems to be a point, universally conceded, that new discoveries in physics render new terms necessary. Modern chemists have certainly gone on this principle. Nor do new discoveries constitute the only ground, as it would appear, on which new terms may be introduced. For as it must be allowed, that some words become obsolete, unless others come into use, the language would be gradually impoverished.

Must such words, as *progress*, (a verb), *grade, lengthy*, and *derangement*, be invariably marked, as unfit for use, while *out-frown, knoed, kicksy-wicksy*, and *lovelily*, pass under the authority of Dr. Johnson?

The making of new words does not appear to be confined to New England; though it is not denied, that we are culpably addicted to it.

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tle, I flatter myself, will be expected or required, but to show the importance of the question together with the difficulty of a solution.

As language, or the expression of ideas by articulate sounds, is peculiar to man, and tends to his intellectual and moral improvement, whatever affects such expression, by rendering it more or less perfect, must have a necessary connexion with his prospects, whether of elevation or happiness. Next to the infelicity of having no language for the communication of our thoughts, is the evil of having one, which answers this end but imperfectly. That the design of language may be effected, it is necessary that he who hears, and he who speaks, should understand terms in the same sense. So far only as they do this, can the ideas of the one be conveyed to the other.

But language is designed not merely to enable individuals or communities of the same age to interchange their thoughts, but likewise to put it in the power of posterity to converse with their ancestors, and to receive, for their own improvement and direction, the experience and wisdom of former ages. Were an entire change suddenly produced in the language of a nation, the channel would be effectually stopped, through which this communication is made; and they would be as unable to profit by the knowledge acquired by their progenitors, as by that of their neighbors, whose dialect they had never learned. The more stability is attached to a language, the better, other things being equal, does it accomplish its intended purpose; and though a change so entire and sudden, as has been suggested,

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Dr. Paley speaks of *levitation*, *dentation*, *traceable*, etc. Mr. Canning, in a late speech, mentions the *insularity* of Great Britain. Are these terms to be used, or not? If not, how many men of such respectability as Dr. Paley and Mr. Canning must use them, before they can be considered as fairly belonging to the English vocabulary?

The Latin language seems to have been mutable, as our own. Horace did not consider it as fixed, even in the Augustan age.

Multa renascentur, quae jam cecidere: cadentque, etc.

On this subject I feel some practical embarrassment from which your opinion would do much towards relieving me.

* * * * * * *

With great respect, I am Sir,
Your obedient and humble servant,
J. APPLETON.

BENJAMIN VAUGHAN, ESQ.

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is not to be apprehended, the adoption of new words and the exclusion of old ones, is an alteration of the same nature, though it be in degree, incomparably less. Some measure of this evil is, however, inevitable. Judging from what is past, we are compelled to conclude, that every language is doomed to share in the mutability of human things. The language of Homer and Hesiod is not the language of modern Greece. As to the changes, which have been made in the Latin, in addition to the fact, that many words in that language were obsolete before the Augustan age, we have the express and abundant testimony of Polybius, Horace, and Quinctilian. The first of these writers, speaking of the earliest treaty between the Romans and Carthaginians, makes the following remark: "Believe me, the Roman language has undergone so many changes since that time, to the present, that even those who are most skilled in the science of antiquities, cannot understand the words of that treaty, but with the greatest difficulty." (Lib. III.) The interval here referred too must have been less than four centuries. "Our whole language," says Quinctilian, "has been in a manner, changed."* Again, "language is ever in a fluctuating state, and consequently some words must become obsolete: others must come in vogue, of all which custom is the only infallible rule."

To the same purpose are the well known lines of Horace;

> "As when the forest, with the bending year,
> First sheds the leaves, which earliest appear,
> So an old age of words maturely dies;
> Others new born in youth and vigor rise.†

Nor did the poet presume, that language would in future be less mutable, than it had been in preceding ages.

> "Shall words presume
> To hold their honors and immortal bloom?
> Many shall rise, that now forgotten lie,
> Others in present credit soon shall die."

Nor can I forbear to repeat the melancholy, but profitable

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* Quid multa? totus prope mutatus est sermo. L. VIII. c. 3. Cum et verba intercidant invalescantque temporibus, ut quorum certissima sit regula in consuetudine. Lib. X. c. 2.

† Ut sylvae foliis pronos mutantur in annos,
Prima cadunt; ita verborum vetus interit aetas;
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata, virentque. *Ars. Poet.*

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reflection, which did not escape the mind, even of a pagan moralist.

"Debemur morti nos, nostraque."

The English language, we know, has undergone great alterations, both in its native and adopted country. No person, at the present day, can read intelligibly the sermons of Latimer or the plays of Shakspeare, without a glossary. Swift quotes, with approbation, the following remark from Lord Oxford: "If it were not for the Bible, and common Prayer Book in the vulgar tongue, we should hardly be able to understand any thing, that was written among us an hundred years ago."

In America we are not only changing the language from what it once was, but from what it now is in England. This was to have been expected; for it would be strange indeed, if the English language should alter in the same particulars and to the same extent, in countries so far removed from each other, and existing under circumstances so different, as England and America. We have, indeed, been complained of with loud reiteration for changing the language of our forefathers. That we are verily guilty in this matter, no candid person can hesitate to acknowledge. That the inhabitants of Great Britain are likewise abandoning many words once in good use, and substituting others in their place, can as little be questioned by any one, who reads their parliamentary speeches.

In English publications of a recent date, we find such words as the following: *acquirability*,[1] *concredit*,[1] *inusitation*,[1] *irresistance*,[1] *endurable*,[2] *modernism*,[3] *encyclopedical*,[4] *necesitarian*[4], *religionism*,[4] *unambiguity*,[4] *argumentable*,[5] *indignancy*,[5] *jugglery*,[5] *peculiarize*,[5] *rotate*,[5] *strue*[5], as a transitive verb, *trickery*,[6] *unhingement*,[5] *belord*,[6] *companionized*,[6] *inquiet*,[6] as a verb, *disacknowledge*,[6] *dramatize*,[6] *facilitation*,[7] *unrevealable*,[8] *inertion*,[9] *amiss*,[10] to be missing, *degrade*,[11] as a nueter verb, *stultifying*,[11], *unconversion*,[11] *immitigable*,[12] *indiscipline*,[12] *luminously*,[12] *mohogic*,[13] belonging to the Mohawks, *savanahamic*,[13] belonging to the savannahs, and *virginic*,[13] belonging to Virginia.

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[1] Paley. [2] Lord Kaimes. [3] Murphey.
[4] Dugald Stewart. [5] Chalmers.
[6] Taylor. [7] Kirk White. [8] Edenb. Rev.
[9] Trans. Wern. Soc. [10] Lord Monboddo. [11] Christian Obs.
[12] Quart. Rev. [13] Encyc. Brit.

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Had some of these terms originated in America, they would probably have been reverberated across the Atlantic.

But though the severity with which British writers have animadverted on our departures from that use which is sanctioned by the best English authority, many, indeed, have been excessive, it has unquestionably contributed to our advantage; and wisdom requires, that we should avail ourselves of all admonitions on this subject, inasmuch as there are some circumstances in the state of our nation, which peculiarly expose our language to changes and corruption. I refer not to commercial character, which is common to us with Great Britain; but to that copious, and almost unlimited immigration, by which our population is annually increased from almost every nation under heaven. It is impossible, that the ten thousand foreigners, who resort hither to participate our national prosperity, should not do much toward contaminating our language with their respective words or idioms.

All changes in language we do not assent to be corruptions. As science advances, new objects and new combinations will be discovered. To express these, new terms must be employed. The language of science undoubtedly admits of improvement. It cannot be questioned, that a knowledge of chemistry may be more easily acquired and longer retained;—nay, that discoveries in that science are more likely to be made, in consequence of those intellectual associations, which are so easily formed, by the nomenclature of Lavoisier. Besides, when there are peculiarities in the government, religion, or pursuits of a nation, there must obviously be a corresponding peculiarity of phrases. The Spartans needed some term, by which to designate their Ephori, and the Romans, their popular Tribunes. If England has a right to her parliament, so have we to our congress; nor is congressional less purely the offspring of congress, than parliamentary is of parliament. Terms, which relate to the peculiar character of a country, may fairly be considered as belonging to the language of that country. "Had the Roman tongue" says Dr. Swift, "continued vulgar in that city till this time, it would have been absolutely necessary, from the mighty changes, which have been made in law and religion, from the many terms of art, required in trade and war, from the new inventions, which have happened in the world, from the vast spreading of navigation and commerce, with many other obvious circumstances, to have made great additions to that language."*

* Letter to Lord Oxford.

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There is another change in language of a different kind, and more gradual. I mean the slow process, by which a figurative expression becomes literal. "If we compare our old language with the new," says Quinctilian, "whatever almost we now speak will be found a figure." We might exemplify this remark in such terms as comprehension, perception, and imagination.—Nearly connected with this subject is the remark of Dr. Johnson: "As by the cultivation of various sciences, a language is amplified, it will be more furnished with words deflected from their original use; the geometrician will talk of the courtier's zenith, or the eccentric virtues of a wild hero; and the physician of sanguine expectation and phlegmatic delays."*

Few I apprehend would be prepared to prohibit the admission of all new words, which might not fall under any of the conditions which have been stated. Neither Horace nor Quinctilian would justify an exclusion so rigid. Still, though there are relative to the subject in hand opposite errors, our danger from both is not equally great. If language has always been in a fluctuating state, and if our own, from circumstances already mentioned, is peculiarly exposed to change, there seems little reason to apprehend, that valuable improvement will be prevented by excluding exotics with intemperate rigor. Our danger is to be looked for in an opposite direction.

Under what conditions then are new words to be introduced? When may we consider them, as having laid aside their barbarous form, and as having assumed the character and standing of natives? This is the very question concerning which I am less able to impart information, than desirous to obtain it.

As language implies a certain compact,—an agreement to designate particular objects and classes by particular names,—to make such and such articulate sounds the signs of ideas, changes in language, it is obvious, must be effected in a similar manner; that is, by general consent, or, in other words, by custom. In this way were to be accomplished those changes in the Roman tongue, predicted by Horace;

> "If custom will, whose arbitrary sway,
> Words and the forms of language must obey."†

"Use" says Quinctilian, "is the best master of language." Again, "Custom is the only infallible rule. For words, in their

* Preface to Dictionary.

† Si volet usus,
Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.

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nature, are neither good nor bad, being of themselves nothing but mere sounds, but only as they are opportunely and properly, or otherwise applied. (Lib. X. 2.)

But among whom must we look for that custom, which is, on this occasion, to be the judge? It might seem plausible to answer, that any word used by the majority of a nation, should be admitted as part of the national language. But to say nothing of the difficulty of ascertaining this point, should we be, in all cases, willing to abide the result? Are no words used by a majority of our own or any other nation, which no good writer would admit into composition, which he designed to make public? Manners are judged of, not by those of a clown, nor by those, which prevail among the majority; nor should we seek for the established rules of medical practice among empirics and charlatans. "As money, to be current, requires to be struck from the die of the state; so," says the Roman Rhetorician, "language, to be received, requires the consent of the learned." "I shall therefore, call the genuine custom of speaking," continues he, "the consent of the learned; as that of living, the approbation of honest men."

The canon, which Dr. Campbell has adopted, though much more definite than that of Quinctilian, does not contradict it. The two lines are parallel, though one is more extensive; perhaps I ought rather to say, more broad and distinct, than the other. Use, in order to become the sole mistress of language, according to Dr. Campbell, must be *reputable*, *national* and *present*. Under national use he comprehends whatever modes of speech are authorized as good by the writings of many, if not the majority of celebrated authors." The word national, he uses, both in opposition to provincial and foreign. The meaning, which he attaches to the epithet present, may be judged of by this remark. "It is safest for an author to consider those words and idioms as obsolete, which have been disused by all good authors, for a longer period, than the age of man. (Vol. I. 315.) If in this rule, notwithstanding the author's labor to draw his lines distinctly, we find less precision, than might be desired, we ought to inquire, whether there be not as much, as the subject admits. The rule has, indeed, for another reason, been severely condemned by a distinguished rhetorician of our own. "It supposes," says he, "a long, settled, universal practice of usages, which never could commence." (Adams's Lectures.) May we not rather say, that it supposes, agreeably to well known fact, that men will sometimes, in their language, depart from

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common usage, and introduce terms, which have no such authority? But the author's censure proceeds further. "The principle of Dr. Campbell, continues he, holds up a purity to be compounded of impurities multiplied. The first time a word is used, by this rule it must be impure. The second, third, and fourth time, it is still impure, though still in a lessening degree. In proportion to the number of its repetitions it grows continually clearer, until by obtruding its pollution on the whole nation, and their best writers for a number of years, it clarifies into a chrystal."

It will not, I hope, be considered disrespectful to the distinguished author of this animadversion, to inquire whether it contains as much of sound argument, as it does of rhetorical vivacity:—and further to ask, whether, were it possible for a piece of bad gold to lose a portion of its alloy, or to acquire some degree of purity from every individual, through whose hands it passed,—and in this way, eventually to become standard gold, its purity thus acquired, would be "compounded of impurities multiplied?" The rule does indeed imply that he, who first uses a new word, or an old word in a new sense, violates the purity of language; but he does it at his own risk; he is making an experiment. Terms thus introduced, to borrow the expression of Dr. Johnson, "stand as candidates or probationers, and must depend for their adoption, on the suffrages of futurity." The republic of letters many either admit or reject them. It is certainly a bold experiment, which a modest man would be cautious of making.

To put the matter in another, and less favorable point of view, if good right to private property, or even a kingdom, may be acquired by prescription, or a long possession, though such possession commenced in usurpation, why may not a word, originally impure, lose its native contamination by long continued and general use? In fine, the thing implied in Dr. Campbell's rule is no more inconsistent or absurd than that what was once not customary, should by a series of acts become so.

We come now to a question, which no European has occasion to answer; a question, which arises from the peculiar relation, which our country bears to Great Britain. Under reputable use, Campbell comprehends whatever modes of speech are authorized as good, by many, if not the majority of celebrated authors. These authors, for the present, will hardly be looked for in America; or if they should be, it will be in connexion with a much greater number in the land of our forefath-

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ers. This must be deemed a just and reasonable way of proceeding, until our literature and literary men shall be able to hold an honorable competition with theirs. This would certainly imply, that no word, with the exceptions already made, of such as may be peculiar to our government, religion, etc. should be considered as in good use, which has never been so considered there. But are we to imitate them in their estimate of terms as obsolete? Must we relinquish a word, which having received from the best English authors, we have preserved for a century, because no man in England can recollect the time, when it was there in good use? The dilemma is this, if we retain what she discards, we, in this respect, break off our intercourse with the present literature of England. If we discard, in imitation of her, we equally break communication with her ancient literature. On this subject I do not presume to offer an opinion.

END.

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ERRATA.

Vol. 1. page 77, line 27, for but, read out.
" p. 85, l. 15, for what, read which.
" p. 92, l. 27, for effectually, read actually.
" p. 102, l. 15, for unacerated, read unmacerated.
" p. 104, l. 8, "and there could be no sounds without air" should follow the words "without sounds" in the preceding clause.
" p. 118, l. 30, for in, read or.
" p. 145, l. 21, for these, read this.
" p. 202, l. 26, for Corie, read Corrie.
" p. 211, last line, for Mag., read Major.
" p. 279, l. 22, for former, read founder.
" p. 299, l. 21, for testimony, read competency.
" p. 357, l. 7, for profuti, read profecti.
" p. 426, l. 27, dele "it."
Vol. 2. p. 40, l. 30, insert "not" after does.
" p. 120, l. 13, for restrained, read retained
" p. 162, l. 8, for etc., read that is.
" p. 145, l. 1, for hostilities, read hostility
" p. 428, l. 7, for and, read as.
" p. 482, last line, for flerent, read florent.
" p. 404, l. 5, for many, read may.
" p. 484, l. 18, for assent, read assert.
" p. 487, l. 25, for many, read may.

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